

The Atlantic

not
"It's the economy, stupid"

We elect our Presidents to do
the impossible: the American economy is
too colossal to be "managed"



BY CHARLES R. MORRIS

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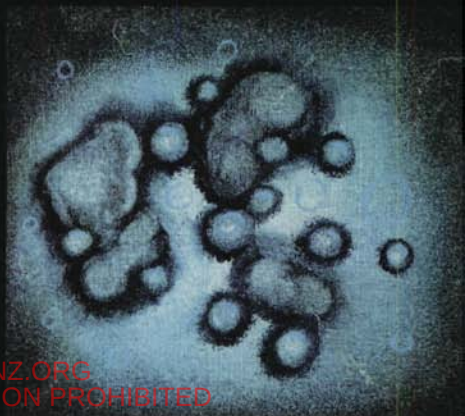




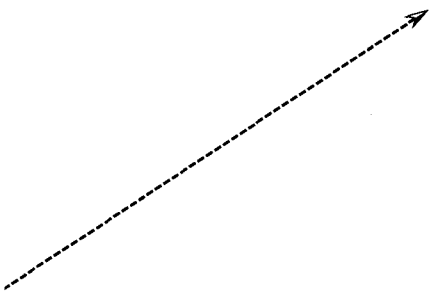
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The Wicked Witch



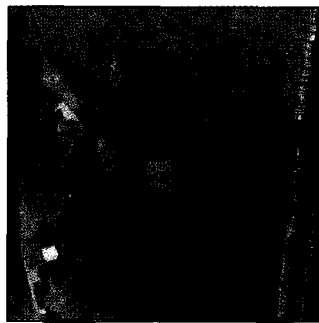
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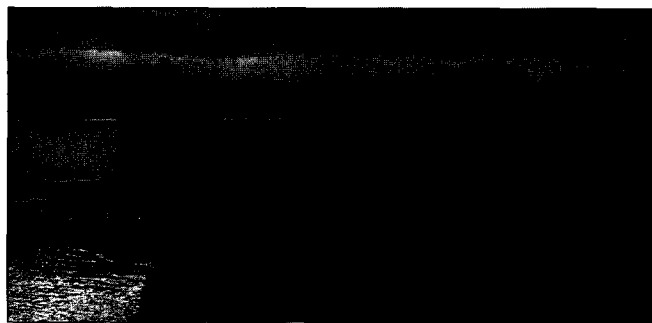
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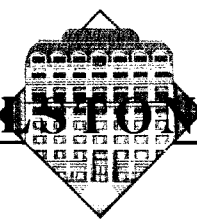
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WHEN IT COMES TO bestowing awards for achievement, the cultural world stands nature on its head: spring tends to be the season not for sowing but for reaping. This spring several of our contributors were honored by their peers for work that has appeared in these pages. The recognition came in the realms of both fiction and non-fiction.

The O. Henry Awards were created in 1918 in memory of the master of the American short story. They are widely regarded as the nation's most prestigious awards for short fiction, and an anthology of the prizewinning stories is published every year. The 1993 anthology includes two stories that were published in *The Atlantic Monthly*: "Yellow Flags," by Charles Eastman (April, 1992), and "The Pink House," by John H. Richardson (July, 1992). The anthology is available from Doubleday.

Last year was a political year, and *The Atlantic's* coverage of national affairs included Wendy Kaminer's "Crashing the Locker Room" (July, 1992), a spirited analysis of why, as of last summer, women accounted for less than six percent of the membership of Congress, and what women can do about it. The National Women's Political Caucus, whose Exceptional Merit Media Award recognizes "excellence in the coverage of issues pertaining to women in politics," has selected

Kaminer to receive this year's EMMA in the magazine-article category. In her article Kaminer was guardedly optimistic about the prospects for women candidates in last November's elections, and the results bore her out: women picked up four seats in the Senate and nineteen in the House of Representatives.

The Los Angeles riot and its causes never became a major issue in the 1992 campaign—an indication, perhaps, of the enduring frivolity of our public discourse. Garry Wills's cover story "The Words That Remade America" (June, 1992) was published immediately after the Los Angeles riot, and while it was not, of course, "about" the riot, it spoke to the intractable problem at the riot's core. Wills's eloquent reconstruction of how Lincoln, in his Gettysburg Address, crafted our eternal national sermon on human equality was at once homage and homily, and it was widely cited in connection with the events in Los Angeles. The book from which it was drawn, *Lincoln at Gettysburg*, has been awarded the 1993 Pulitzer Prize for general nonfiction.

The contributors mentioned above and our many other contributors, writers and illustrators alike, share in an award recently won by *The Atlantic Monthly* as a collective enterprise: the 1993 National Magazine Award for general excellence.

—THE EDITORS

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The July Almanac was compiled with the assistance of Gail Cleere, on behalf of the U.S. Naval Observatory; Dr. Joseph Rodgers, of the University of Oklahoma; and Ethan Seidman.



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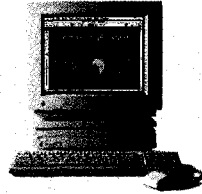
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



DAN QUAYLE WAS RIGHT

Re Barbara Dafoe Whitehead's important article ("Dan Quayle Was Right," April *Atlantic*) about the value to children of growing up in an intact two-parent family: I am the author of the "children's book [*What Am I Doing in a Stepfamily?*] published in 1982" from which she quotes, a book that concludes with the thought that "getting to know and like so many people" in both first and remarried households can be one of the positive results of living in a stepfamily.

The book, however, does not promote the remarried household as the family of choice. My purpose was to address the issues that are important to many children who are about to enter a stepfamily: What if my stepparent has children? Do I have to do what my stepparent tells me? I don't live with my stepfamily. What will happen when I visit? To my young readers, the book offers candor and, I hope, hope. Most important, it encourages children to talk about these issues with their parents and stepparents.

A more recent book of mine, *A Hole in My Heart: Adult Children of Divorce Speak Out*, says, "Divorce is not good for children. Furthermore, its painful effects are long-lasting." After having interviewed many men and women, ages twenty-four to sixty-seven, who grew up as children of divorce, I concluded that "we must accept the fact that many of the difficulties that children of divorce face are, in one way or another, attributable to the loss of the intact family. There is just no getting around it." And "the best plan for a child (if it is at all achievable) is to grow up safely in a family with both parents in residence."

CLAIRE BERMAN
New York, N.Y.

lies as if it were some controversial new discovery. I'm one of the authorities cited as criticizing the 1950s family, but I do not "discredit" two-parent families, nor do I claim that all family changes have been positive. Child welfare *has* declined, but, as Whitehead admits, most of that decline is in comparison with the late 1960s and early 1970s, the height of the "Great Society," not in comparison with "the postwar heyday of the family," when 30 percent of U.S. children and 50 percent of black two-parent families were poor, and high school completion rates were much lower than they are today.

Whitehead's chronological sleight of hand reveals the underlying problem with identifying family change and parental failure, rather than economic reverses and social fragmentation, as the "central cause" of poverty, educational setbacks, crime, and personal dysfunction. The political implication is that marriage is a substitute for anti-poverty programs and high-paying jobs; if parents were more committed, we wouldn't have to reorganize our workplaces and social institutions to meet twenty-first-century realities. The personal implication is that a mother who can't get married or hold on to her man has doomed her kids to failure.

Consider the double bind for a divorced or never-married mom. After reading Whitehead's eight pages on the supposedly disastrous effects of a father's absence, she may well be persuaded to run out and find a husband. But, as Whitehead then points out, children from stepfamilies do even worse! This is hardly a helpful use of data. Fortunately, it's also not a very accurate use of data. Researchers are for good reason reluctant to make the blanket judgments she demands.

All families have areas of vulnerability and strength. Adults in single-parent families spend less time supervising homework than those in two-parent families, but more time talking with

It is disingenuous of Barbara Whitehead to recycle forty years of conventional wisdom about two-parent fami-

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their children. Stepfamilies run into difficulty when they try to replicate "traditional" parent-child expectations, but frequently have more-supportive relationships than the original family once they develop new guidelines and values. Families that work well in one socioeconomic setting may explode in a different one. History shows that the best predictor of a family's success in rearing children is not its form but its access to social support networks beyond the family. Let's figure out constructive ways to build on the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of all American families.

STEPHANIE COONTZ
Olympia, Wash.

Barbara Dafoc Whitehead correctly points out that in the past twenty years or so the social metric in America has shifted from child well-being to adult well-being, and she argues persuasively that this change and related ones have substantially harmed children and hampered their development. A question she does not attempt to answer is whether this change has enhanced the average well-being of adults.

The answer to this question, I am convinced, is no. Most indicators of adult psychological well-being in America, including people's reports of how happy they are, have neither increased nor decreased more than slightly in the past two or three decades, *in spite* of several trends—including improvements in health—that should have tended to increase happiness, satisfaction, and other positive feelings. Family changes during this period have almost certainly tended to diminish adult well-being. Persons in marriages they deem "very happy" are, by a substantial margin, happier and better satisfied than divorced, widowed, never-married, or less-than-happily married adults, and the first category has declined from about half of all adults twenty years ago to just over a third today.

As Whitehead says, many adults benefit from divorce and remarriage, and one might think that the legal and cultural changes that have facilitated the ending of bad marriages would have had an unambiguously positive effect on adult well-being. One must consider, however, that the changes that make it easier to escape unsatisfactory marriages also increase the proba-

bility that marriages will become unsatisfactory. One spouse's freedom to leave the marriage at will is the other spouse's insecurity, and that insecurity can lead to wariness and reluctance to commit fully to the marriage and to make the investments—of time, energy, and so forth—necessary to make the marriage satisfactory.

In many specific instances adults pursue their own interests to the detriment of their children's well-being, but in a broader sense the interests of children and adults are not in conflict. The same values, norms, and adult behavior patterns that contribute to children's well-being also contribute, in the aggregate and in the long run, to adults' well-being.

NORVAL D. GLENN
*University of Texas
Austin, Texas*

The oxymoronic title of Barbara Whitehead's article notwithstanding, I agree with many of the points that Whitehead made (particularly with regard to the devastating effect of post-divorce poverty and the problems associated with stepparenting). Nonetheless, I believe that many of the studies she cited contain a fundamental scientific flaw. These studies consistently showed that by virtually any measure children from divorced families fare worse than those from intact families. An association between two things, however, does not establish a causal relationship.

Whitehead compares the performance of children in intact families with those in divorced families, and attributes the differences to the divorce itself. A necessary assumption in making such a comparison is that the two types of families were not fundamentally different before the divorce occurred. Common sense—and epidemiological considerations—suggest that this assumption is a highly questionable one.

Suppose, for example, that certain personal characteristics increase the likelihood that a person will get a divorce (for example, inability to stick it out when things get tough, laziness, hostility, rigidity, selfishness, lack of strong religious beliefs). That certainly seems plausible. Then suppose that the children of people with these characteristics, through genetic and environmental influences, tend to be more

likely to have the same characteristics. That also seems plausible. Then suppose that many of the very same characteristics that predispose a person to divorce also impair the ability of a child to perform well in society (resulting in poor school performance, for example). Again plausible.

It is not surprising that the appropriate methodology has not been used in these studies; the effects of divorce can't be measured without interfering with the results (the social-science equivalent of the Heisenberg principle). Theoretically, in order to tease out the effect of the *divorce itself* on children, one would need a large number of couples who had made the decision to divorce. Then one would randomly allocate half the couples to Group A, where the divorce would proceed without interference, and half to Group B, where the couple would be forced to live together until the children were grown. The two groups of children could then be compared. This study, of course, will never be done: couples can't be forced to stay together against their will, and the construct would be artificial even if they could.

The effect of divorce on children is complex, and its analysis is not well served by exaggeration and oversimplification. Understanding it will take a lot more time than getting Murphy Brown off the air.

PHILIP D. HANSTEN
Bainbridge Island, Wash.

Barbara Whitehead effectively obscures the basic reason for poor performance in school, single-parent homes, and the rise in crime and desperation: the gap between the rich minority and the escalating poor sections of our society. If she is sincere in her campaign for better family values, she should be in Washington lobbying for two things: a full-employment program and a national health plan like Canada's, to alleviate the tensions that tear families apart.

BERNARD FORER
Sarasota, Fla.

Nothing starts a more vicious argument than someone willing to speak the truth. Thanks for publishing Barbara Whitehead's insightful but poorly titled work.

PHILLIP H. HARRIS
Alexandria, Va.



Much of Barbara Dafoe Whitehead's article is a beautiful elaboration of a point I have long thought essential to make to introductory social-science students: the purpose of legitimacy rules, found in all cultures, is to make it as sure as possible that every child has a stable pair of related adults assigned as caregivers; there are no accepted substitutes, except in adapting to emergencies such as the loss of a parent by death.

But why give Dan Quayle special credit for being right? Surely some of the laughter over his Murphy Brown remarks was due not to public toleration of single motherhood but to the former Vice President's history of using simplistic slogans to deal with complex issues. Perhaps his comments even caused a bit of delay in the dawning of light about the real importance of intact families.

LEROY MARTINSON
Valparaiso, Ind.

Although childbearing is a natural function, it is not, especially given present medical technology, inevitable, like death and taxes, or even necessary, like eating. What needs to occur is not a return to procrustean taboos but rather support for the concept of family planning. No longer is it misanthropic to view having children as a privilege, not a right, requiring that both partners take responsibility for the life and development of each child. Global survival depends on limiting births and taking care of the children we have.

After twenty years in law enforcement—on the street, in corrections, and in academe—working for and with many agencies, I have never met anyone, regardless of race, belief, or socioeconomic condition, who celebrates parental separation as a triumph of diversity. To the contrary, “study after study” shows the tragic effect of family breakup on children and adults, too. It is fatuous to state otherwise.

SANDY BRYSON
Markleeville, Calif.

To claim as “nuclear family” a two-parent heterosexual unit with children is to read a politico-economic agenda into the reality of nuclear families. And that agenda is requisite to the survival of patriarchal thought. Also, I believe that your April cover presentation must be added to the list of Susan

Faludi's examples of backlash in the United States which hurts women and children. Whitehead's article is an irresponsible and violent use of data against single parents, stepparents, blended families, and the children in these families who are daily facing the pejorative stereotypes perpetuated in the article. As well, it is irresponsible to publish only one understanding of the data when equal sets of data show the destruction of children in two-parent heterosexual homes.

REV. LEA ELISABETH AUSTEN
Gaithersburg, Md.

The idea that couples get divorced only to make *their* lives happier, without ever considering the psychological and financial impact on their children, is ludicrous and cruel. In the “good old days” of Dan Quayle a significant number of women and their children incurred unspeakable abuse behind the white picket fences of apparently intact families, keeping their problems out of sight. “Families” stayed together enduring incest, verbal and physical beatings, and other forms of abuse. Responsible family psychologists believe that the catalyst for becoming a dysfunctional adult presents itself way, way before the parents finally decide to divorce, and children suffer far more when their two-parent home rivals the Tet offensive.

D. JEAN HANNON
South Dartmouth, Mass.

Open eyes and hearts will verify that children have suffered from the upheaval of recent decades. But Barbara Whitehead focuses so exhaustively on attitudes—“regime effects,” “normalized deviance,” and so on—that she neglects the key role of laissez-faire economics in weakening both families and the communities in which they're embedded.

Consider the ideal modern employee: infinitely “flexible,” willing to work seventy-hour weeks and to retrench, retrain, or relocate anywhere, anytime—in short, clearly not an ideal family member. Consider the minimum wage, a meager standard in its own right which also permits employers to deny family-supporting wages to jobs higher on the scale. Finally, consider how unchecked capital mobility—a tenet of “family values” guy Dan Quayle and other conservatives—can

decimate entire towns in the name of competitiveness. This is critical, because stable families *require* stable communities, require the support (and occasional reproof) provided by kin networks and neighborhoods, churches, and PTAs.

STEPHEN KANE
Portland, Oreg.

Barbara Dafoe Whitehead maintains that children who grow up under the same roof with both biological parents are not only better adjusted girls and boys but also better able to establish and maintain intimate relationships as grown women and men. Yet the very parents she indicts for divorcing, cohabiting, and remarrying at such unprecedented rates can only be—no social research here, just simple math—the children of the largely “intact” homes of the fifties and sixties.

This obvious departure from logic is flanked by a variety of others. Perhaps the most glaring is Whitehead's assumption that “the evidence is in,” once and for all. She implies that studies over twenty years of social transition are final in their results and absolutely predictive of the future. She rules out—without ever examining them—the ways in which our society might constructively respond to diversity in family structure.

It is easy to detect at least one reason, however, for her narrowness of vision. Whitehead's concept of social reality is crippled by her awe of patriarchal authority. When Whitehead asserts, for instance, that widows are more successful among single parents because of their skill at invoking the authority of the dead father, how can any rational reader take her seriously?

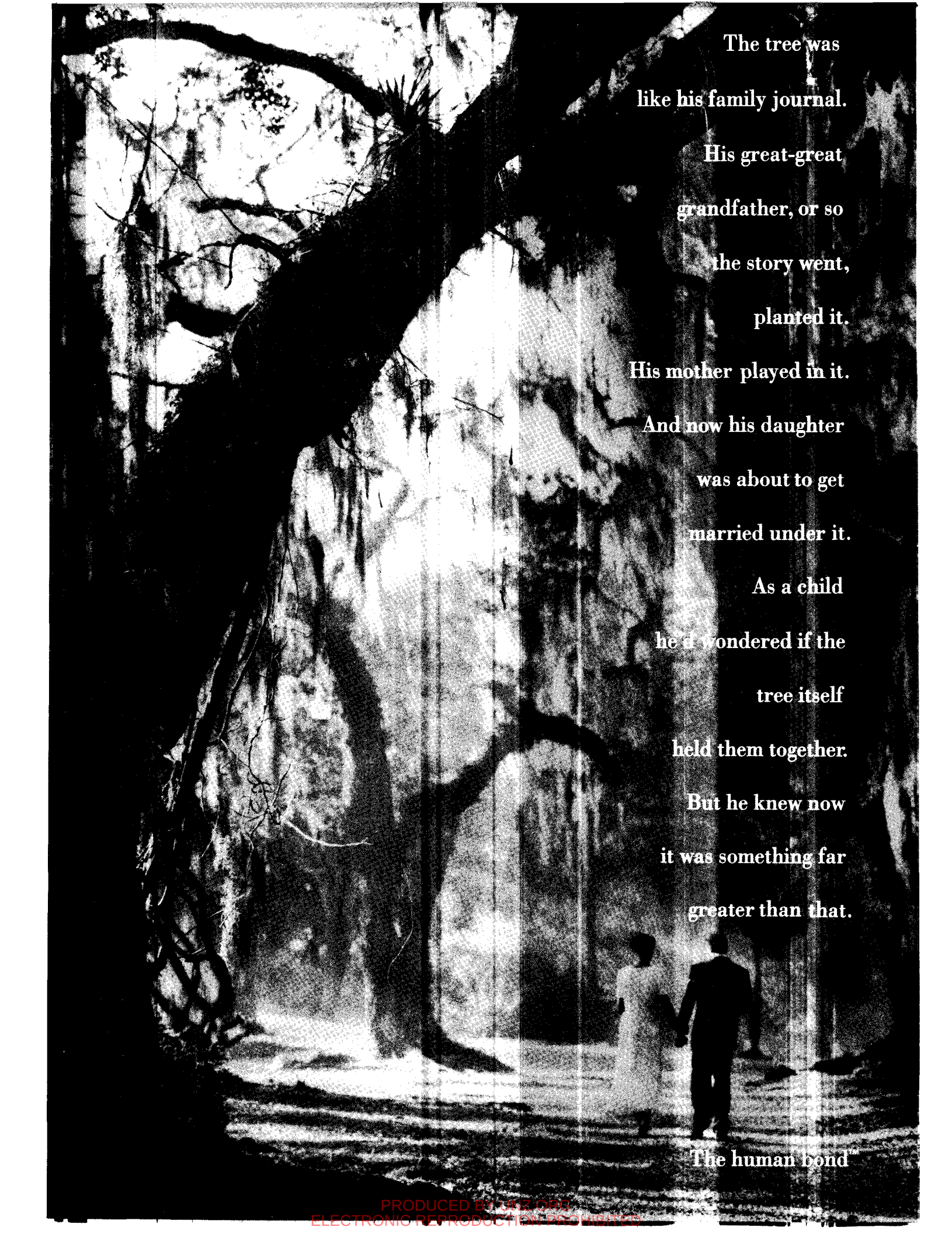
SARAH GARDNER
Millbrook, N.Y.

Barbara Dafoe Whitehead made some interesting although misleading statements. I believe that the thrust of her analysis of the well-being of children from intact families versus the well-being of children from disrupted families is strongly linked to income level. Additionally, I believe she missed the boat in her selection of samples for comparison. Children belong to one of three groups: children of good marriages, children of bad marriages, and children from disrupted families.

Divorce is the consequence of a poor



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The tree was
like his family journal.

His great-great
grandfather, or so
the story went,
planted it.

His mother played in it.

And now his daughter
was about to get
married under it.

As a child
he'd wondered if the
tree itself
held them together.

But he knew now
it was something far
greater than that.

The human bond™



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...here
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have been
people give their
dreams for

years
we still believe
our strongest
bond
is human.

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marriage and not of a good marriage. Therefore, the meaningful level of analysis would seem to be the relative well-being of children raised in poor marriages versus the well-being of children raised in broken marriages. Clearly, the children from good marriages, with probably two incomes contributing toward one household, and an environment of stability and love, should fare on average better than children from the other two groups.

Whitehead implies that divorce necessarily leads to instability. In many cases the reverse is true, and one or both parents chose to retrieve stability in their lives by dissolving their dysfunctional spousal relationship in an attempt to gain peace at home. Again, if more attention were paid to the relative impact on children of keeping together a lousy marriage versus opting for divorce, while controlling for differences in income, we would have some meaningful statistics.

Finally, if the majority of our current adult population was reared in predominantly intact families, and a large percentage have opted for divorce, could it be that those intact families were not as ideal as the article suggests?

KATHRYN M. VERREAULT
Mont Vernon, N.H.

Barbara Dafoe Whitehead replies:

Two alternative arguments to my thesis are raised in these letters. My thesis, simply put, is that family disruption harms children and undermines society. One alternative argument is that economic decline, rather than family disruption, is harmful to children. Call this the "money-deficit" thesis. The second argument is that parental unhappiness, not family breakup itself, is detrimental to children. Call this the "happiness-deficit" thesis. I believe that both these counterarguments are flawed. Let me explain why.

Stephanie Coontz and Bernard Forer claim that economic forces such as declining wages, rising unemployment, and income inequality are more responsible for children's problems than family disruption. Yes, economic problems do harm many children. In particular, the loss of well-paying blue-collar jobs makes it harder for many parents to be economic providers for their children. Careful readers will note that I address this issue in the public-policy section of the article.

But if these writers are concerned about the economic well-being of children, why are they silent about the economic harm to children caused by nonmarriage and divorce? If low wages are an economic problem, what about disappearing dads? If unemployment creates economic difficulties, what about the economic impact of divorce on children? If slow job growth means less money for children, what about the steady growth of unwed childbearing? Both kinds of phenomena, it seems to me, have damaging economic consequences for children. Both are forms of economic injustice. From a child's standpoint, the loss of a father's financial support as a result of family disruption is probably more devastating and certainly more permanent than the loss of a father's financial support through unemployment.

Bernard Forer suggests that I should go to Washington to lobby for full employment and a national health plan. Perhaps he will be comforted to know that, like most Americans, I favor both. Full employment would indeed offset some of the economic damage caused by the loss of blue-collar jobs. But the fact remains: even the higher levels of public investment that Forer calls for would not compensate for the diminished parental investment of time and money in children which stems from family disruption. Forer and other people who are committed to improving the lives of children should lobby for intact families.

We must also work to create a more supportive ecology for families. As Stephen Kane correctly points out, families deserve and require more-hospitable local environments if children are to do well.

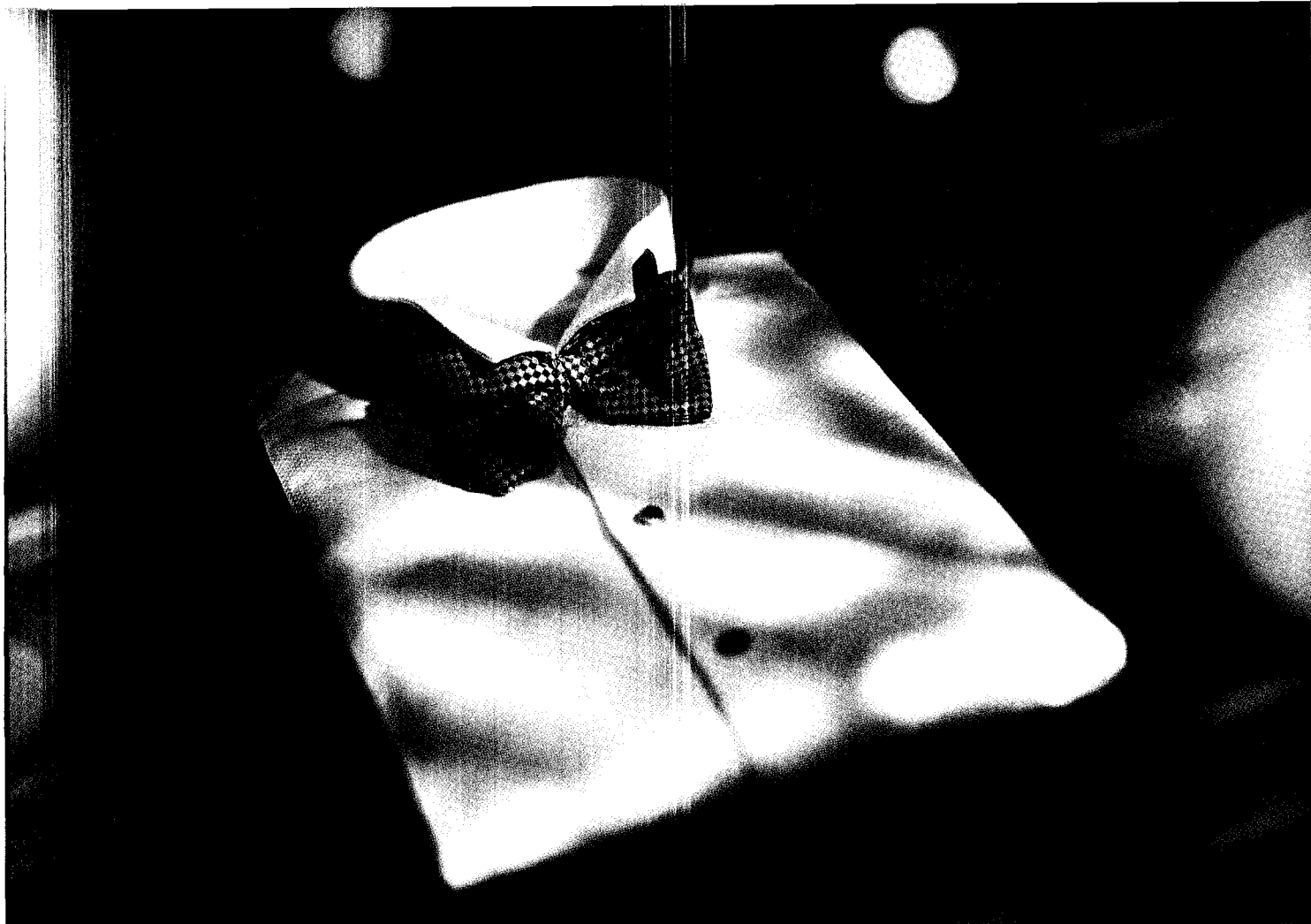
This brings me to the happiness-deficit thesis. Despite a growing body of evidence about the negative and long-term effects of divorce on children's emotional well-being (and Claire Berman adds yet more corroborating evidence), a number of readers find the evidence unconvincing. Philip Hansten claims that many studies exaggerate the harmful effects of divorce on children's psychological well-being by comparing kids in intact families and kids in disrupted families. A better approach, he contends, would be to divide the universe of intact families into happy families and unhappy families. Such a study might actually reveal little

difference in emotional health between children in families where unhappy parents stay together and children in families where unhappy parents break up.

Hansten may have a point—but, I hasten to add, it is a small point. Let's say he is right. His point does nothing to overturn the evidence about the harmful effects of family disruption on children. Nor does it mean that the divorce itself does not trigger new conflicts and problems. Let us recall what happens from the child's standpoint when divorce occurs. Divorce brings about the physical separation of a child and a parent, usually the father. Divorce commonly reduces the child's family income and sometimes erodes family assets, particularly in contested child-custody cases. Divorce often brings about residential instability. Divorce introduces new adults—stepmothers or stepfathers, boyfriends or girlfriends—into the child's family. Divorce increases the chances that there will be a succession of family disruptions. Divorce can even trigger violence against the children (such as parental kidnapping). And, after all that, divorce does not even reliably reduce conflict and tension between the unhappy parents.

Nor is marital happiness clearly the chief determinant of child well-being. After all, in some families where the parents are wildly happy with each other—a recently remarried couple, for example—the children may remain deeply troubled and unhappy. Conversely, though parents may be disaffected or emotionally estranged from each other, their children may be reasonably happy.

In my opinion, Norval Glenn's commentary offers a far more compelling way of thinking about the happiness question. In a high-divorce society, more unhappy marriages end in divorce, and more marriages are likely to be unhappy. But divorce does little to advance long-term adult happiness, even as it diminishes children's happiness. Glenn proposes a different metric of happiness: pursue the well-being of children, and the well-being of adults will increase as well. This social metric is consistent with historical and moral traditions in the United States which teach us that mothers and fathers should act in the best interests of their children.



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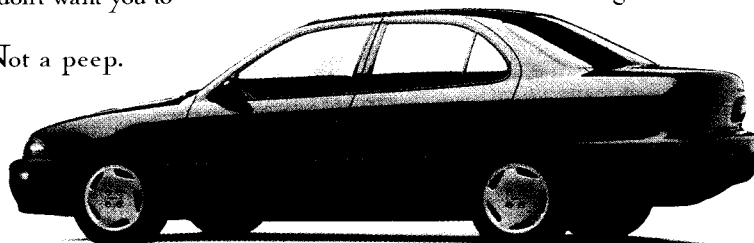
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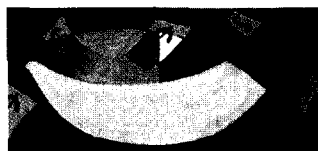
July 1, the Draughn-Cavazos Law goes into effect in Virginia, limiting personal handgun purchases to one a month, except under special circumstances: people seeking to replace a stolen gun, or gun collectors filling out their collections, may be granted permission to exceed that limit. The legislation—among the first of its kind in this country—is intended to end Virginia's notoriety as a gunrunning capital. It takes its name from those of a McDonald's security guard and a state trooper who were murdered in that state early this year. Today is also the deadline by which the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission must make its recommendations for a new round of domestic military base closings—the third such round in five years. President Clinton has two weeks to accept or reject the panel's recommendations. If he accepts them, Congress will have 45 legislative days to consider the list as a whole; it will not be able to make any additions or deletions.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Fatalities from recreational boating accidents peak this month, which sees 16 percent of the year's total. Educational campaigns focusing on boating safety have met with some success: such fatalities declined steadily from 1985 (1,116 deaths) to 1990 (865). However, the National Transportation Safety Board argues that further reductions are unlikely without the enactment of stricter legis-



lation, and in fact the number of fatalities rose in 1991, to 924. The board recommends that states test the blood-alcohol concentrations of all operators of boats involved in fatal accidents (a recent study suggested that at least 37 percent of operators involved in such accidents had been drinking) and consider mandating that all children 12 and younger wear life jackets (most boating deaths are caused by drowning). They also urge that states consider requiring boat operators to obtain a license: motorboats are at present among the few transport vehicles that can be operated without one.



FOOD

July 1, a European Community package of quotas and tariffs on bananas from Latin America goes into effect today. The restrictions involve a duty of 20 percent on the first two million tons of these bananas and 180 percent on the rest; they are intended to cut by more than half the number of bananas—currently 2.5 million tons—imported to Europe from Latin America, in order to protect growers on Europe's subtropical islands, on European islands in the Caribbean, and in former colonies in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific. The regulations have outraged not only Latin Americans but also consumers in some EC countries who prefer the larger and, until now, cheaper Latin American variety. Sentiment runs especially high in Germany, where per capita banana consumption is half again as high as in the other EC countries, owing largely to East Germans' newfound fondness for the fruit. With millions of excess bananas on the market, the U.S. retail price could drop by as much as 10 percent.



ARTS & LETTERS

July 30, the opening of the Smithsonian Institution's National Postal Museum—the nation's first major museum devoted to postal history and philately—in Washington, D.C. The museum, which will occupy that city's former central post office, on Capitol Hill, will house some 16 million objects pertaining to the mail. Some highlights: Charles Lindbergh's airmail-pilot application; half of a fake moustache worn by a train robber raiding the mail; a shipping container designed to hold a live queen bee; and the uniform worn by TV letter carrier Cliff Clavin, of *Cheers*. The museum will include more than 30 interactive exhibits, among them video games that challenge visitors to choose the best mail route between various cities in the 1800s and to "deliver" mail in a De Havilland biplane. It will also contain a research library and a functioning post office.

THE SKIES

July 3, Full Moon, also known this month as the Thunder, Hay, or Full Buck Moon. The Haida of coastal Alaska and British Columbia call it the Killer Whale Moon. 4, Earth is at aphelion, its greatest distance all year from the Sun—some 94.3 million miles. 15, Venus, the waxing crescent Moon, the bright star Aldebaran, and the star cluster called the Pleiades (also known as the Seven Sisters) all lie close together high in the early-morning eastern sky.



DEMOGRAPHICS

Summer is the peak season for females in the United States to begin menstruating: 32 percent of those who experience menarche in a given year do so in June or July. There is as yet no definitive explanation for this pattern, which holds across age and race. Researchers have found little correlation between season of first menstruation and several other physical variables, such as height and weight, or a number of social variables, including personality, level of sex education, family size, family reading habits, and level of parental education. The pattern in this country appears to be different from that in Europe, where studies have revealed two seasonal peaks for menarche—summer and winter—and a tendency for it to occur during the month of one's birth.



100 YEARS AGO

Edith M. Thomas, writing in the July, 1893, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "The country and the city are antipodal in this: that as we very fitly speak of the 'dead of winter' in the country, we might with equal propriety of description speak of the 'dead of summer' in the city. In this season, urban aridity and desolateness everywhere stamp themselves upon the mind of the late delayer within walled-town limits. . . . The sole of the foot aches from concussion with the heated pavement. That curiously distancing effect produced to the eye by hot air in motion, which in the country makes the far harvest fields seem yet farther, is even more distinctly experienced in the town. It is a Sahara distance from one side of the square to the other,—an eye-narrowing, shimmering perspective of sunshine, dust, and drought. How is it to be crossed?"

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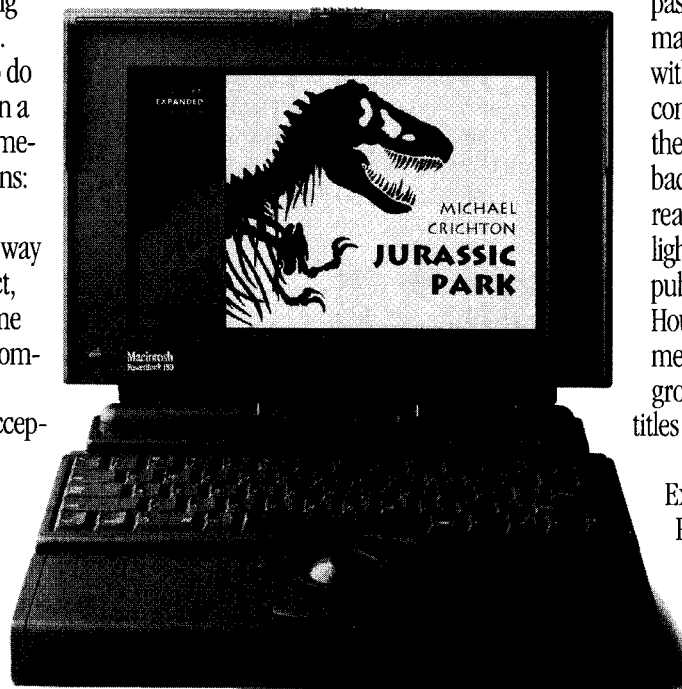
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REPORTS & COMMENT

NOTES

The Newest Minority

We must face up to a looming political problem: the core constituency for the public schools is shrinking

THE FEDERAL census for 1990 confirms something that some of us had suspected: families with school-aged children make up a surprisingly small percentage of the U.S. population.

In 1950, five years after the end of the Second World War, 46.3 percent of American households had children under eighteen. Ten years later the historic Baby Boom was at full crest, and families with children were a remarkable 48.4 percent of all American households, just short of a majority.

But then by 1970 the proportion of households with children was down to 44 percent, and in 1980 it was down to 37.5 percent. In 1990, after a full decade in which Baby Boomers had had babies themselves, and were joined in the endeavor by record numbers of new immigrants of child-bearing age, the proportion was down again, to 34.6 percent. Elementary school enrollments have begun picking up during the past few years, but in most parts of the country they will not achieve the peak numbers of the past.

It's in the old industrial states of the Northeast and the Midwest that the new demographics

are most apparent. In New York, households with children were 44.5 percent of the total in 1960, 41.2 percent in 1970, 35.2 percent in 1980, and 31.1 percent in 1990. The figures for Massachusetts were 46.4 percent, 42.4 percent, 35.1 percent, and 32.3 percent; for Illinois 46.3 percent, 43.4 percent, 37.4 percent, and 33.4 percent; and for Michigan 51.4 percent, 47.6 percent, 37.7 percent, and 34.9 percent.

Surprisingly, the Sun Belt states do not rack up the countervailing numbers that the popular impression might suggest. These places are seeing the migration of young people from other parts of the country and immigration from Asia and Latin America—but they also attract senior citizens. The net result: large overall declines in the proportion

of young families from 1960 to 1970 and from 1970 to 1980, with only minor rebounds from 1980 to 1990.

Numbers like these are not rigidly predictive, but they provide a way of thinking about the downward-tending fortunes of public education in many communities. Heads of households with children under eighteen are, after all, the core constituency for education in this country—not because they are more enlightened or civic-minded than anybody else but precisely because they are like everybody else: they think first about their own welfare and that of their immediate families. When they vote or meet with or talk to their neighbors, they are likely to have the schools in mind. And when their numbers begin to decline substantially, the schools will likely suffer.

The baby dearth has hit the schools of the American suburb hard. The very community that was such a good place to raise a family in the 1960s is the most likely to have a large complement of empty-nesters in the 1990s, many of whom will be less interested in the schools than they once were.

The district I represent in the Massachusetts state senate includes Belmont, a middle-class and upper-middle-class suburb of 24,720. Belmont is a wonderful town, home to many people, once blue-collar, who have moved out over the years from the urban environs of Cambridge and Boston, and to others who hail from around the country and have been drawn to professional opportunities in the nearby cities or along the Route 128 technology belt.

Belmont takes great pride in

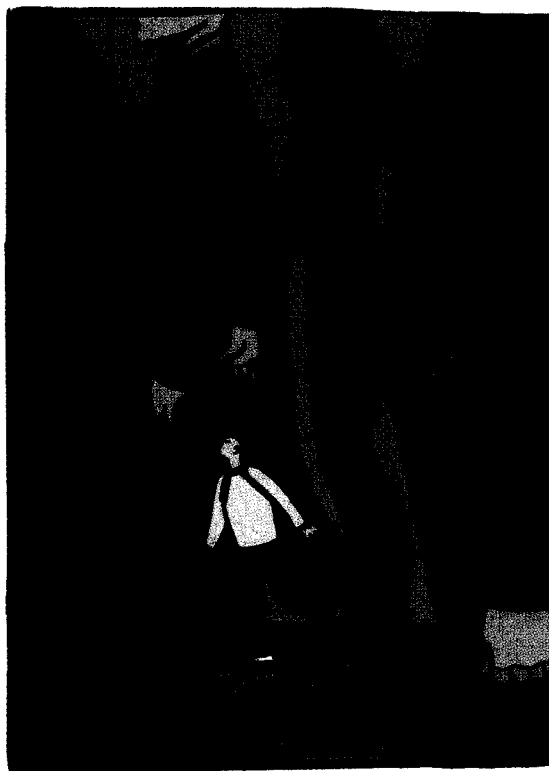


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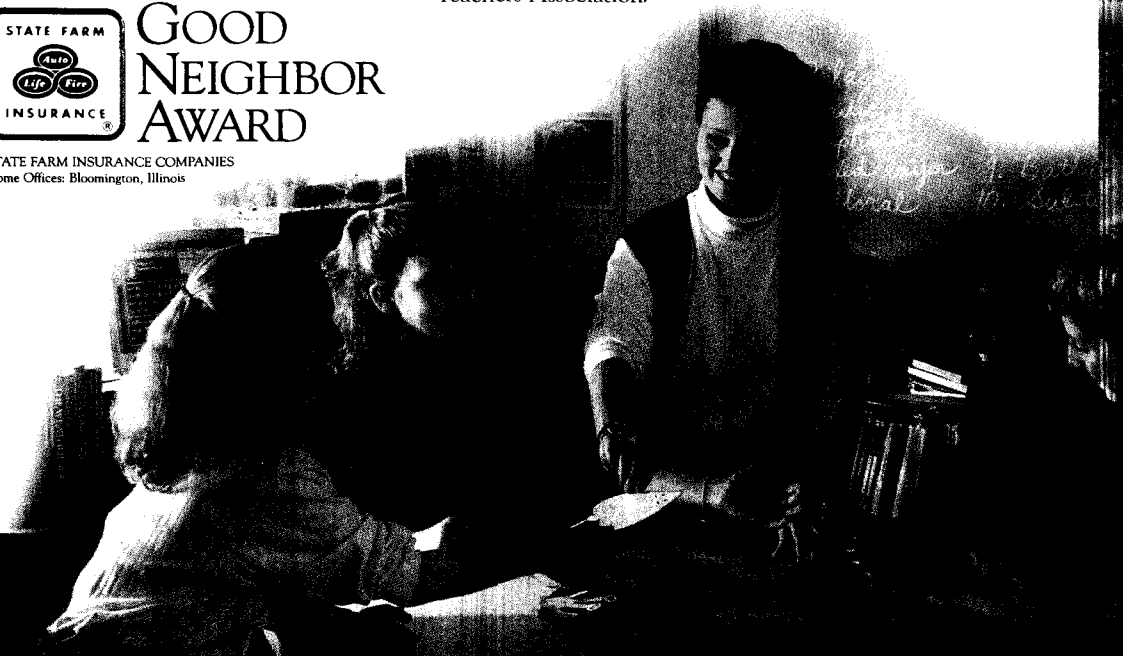
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both the reputation and the appearance of its gracefully landscaped high school, complete with duck pond, which lies near the town center. More than 90 percent of the school's juniors and seniors take the SATs, the average combined verbal and mathematics score is over a thousand, and 87 percent of the graduating class at least begin a four-year college education.

But the Belmont schools are caught in the demographic squeeze. In 1960, the postwar influx having supplied a stream of young settlers, 42.0 percent of the households had children under eighteen. Ten years later the figure had declined to 35.7 percent. It was down to 28.7 percent by 1980 and 26.4 percent by 1990. Outside observers would hardly call Belmont a retirement community, yet sometime around 1975 it reached a watershed for an American town: the proportion of its households containing people over sixty-five exceeded the proportion of its households with children under eighteen.

The effects of such a demographic squeeze are manifested subtly, and only over time. In the twelve years that have passed since Proposition 2½, the Massachusetts property-tax limitation law, took effect, Belmont town meeting has never placed a proposal on the ballot to exempt the operating budget of the schools from the tax cap. Such a proposal, termed an override, would require the approval of the townspeople in an open election, and the risk of rejection has always seemed too high.

As fiscal year 1991 approached, and Belmont town finances began to be very tight, it was deemed the wiser course to mount an override campaign on the more unifying issue of funding trash collection, in the knowledge that an exemption for trash would have the effect of freeing up money for the schools. Even this question passed by a scant 439 votes out of 5,585 votes cast, after an arduous effort by proponents of town services. "We'll never do it again," a member of the League of Women Voters told me with a groan.

Belmont is a healthy, thriving place, and it may well be that the citizenry will rally behind its tradition of fine education. But the going will be tough, because the problem remains: in cities and towns across the country a demographic bulge once operated to keep the schools at the center of community life, and now it is gone. Today the pres-

ence of kids in every other house on the street is something out of the past, and the parents of schoolchildren, middle-class and poor alike, are the country's newest minority group. At a historic moment when the schools need to be better than ever, they are instead treading water, even slipping back a bit, and by world standards genuine excellence is a long way off.

ONE HAS TO wonder, then: Will communities like Belmont, composed of growing proportions of nonparents and empty nesters—people more likely to insist on quality health care than on quality education—continue to support their schools? To put the matter simply, will the votes be there? And if they are not, what does American democracy do then?

There is an answer, one as old as the republic. In 1787, as the people of the liberated colonies wrestled with the question of a Constitution for their new country, James Madison wrote "The Advantages of Union," the famous Federalist Paper in which he proposed to control the effects of faction and the resulting risk to individuals of mistreatment by local majorities. His recourse was the intelligent design of government. Madison wrote,

The smaller the number of individuals composing a majority, and the smaller the compass within which they are placed, the more easily will they concert and execute their plans of oppression. Extend the sphere, and you take in a greater variety of parties and interests; you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of other citizens. . . .

Applying Madison's idea to education by extending state and national responsibility for the protection of parental minorities might be expected to stir up a fuss. There is, after all, a long-standing tradition of local control over the schools. But no one means to abolish the local function; balance is the issue here—an artful recalibration of roles among the local, state, and national spheres of American democracy.

The vexing question of school finance cries out for Madisonian thinking. As a modest step toward escaping the tyranny of local majorities, federal funding for public education should be returned over time to the level at which it was in 1980—9.8 percent



of school expenditures. This would amount to about \$23 billion a year: a good start to reinvigorating the federal role, especially if the commitment spurred matching efforts on the part of the states.

As sensibly Madisonian as it may be, increasing federal spending on education is not the only option. Why not a federalism swap? If Washington were to divide its savings from defense cuts and other sources into essentially three accounts, deficit reduction, economic stimulus, and health care, and adopt a funding schedule for the third which picked up the state and local portions of Medicaid as part of a national health-

insurance scheme, the other tiers of government would have more than enough money to fund education reform—including special aid to poor districts—on their own. This would neatly apportion responsibility: health-care finance at the federal level, school finance at the state and local levels.

The deepening political isolation of families with children imperils the aims of excellence and equity both. A Madisonian solution, its roots deep in the soil of traditional American thinking, offers us a way out. The Clinton Administration and Congress should take it.

—Michael J. Barrett



FINANCE

The Unifying Theme

One of the world's great capitalists has taken on his riskiest venture yet: Eastern Europe

THE HUNGARIAN-born investment genius and philanthropist George Soros has shied away from publicity for most of his life, but the self-styled “financial and philosophical speculator” fairly vaulted into the public eye not long ago. Soros, age sixty-two, has been a figure of note on Wall Street for many years; his canny

sense of financial-market turns led *Institutional Investor* magazine in 1981 to anoint him “the world’s greatest money manager,” a title he arguably retains today. He has also been exerting a significant and salutary influence in Eastern Europe since the mid-1980s, when he started distributing scholarships and photocopiers to dissident intellectuals in Hungary and other Soviet satellite nations, helping to set the fuse for the implosion of communism at the end of the decade.

Late last year he was yet more active in both spheres than he had ever been before. With the European monetary system groaning under high German interest rates, Soros’s Quantum Fund and its investment outriders placed a \$10 billion wager that Britain would be compelled to devalue the pound sterling. When this came about, on September

16, his funds were suddenly around \$1 billion richer, and Soros had become the Man Who Broke the Bank of England. He made headlines again last December by committing \$100 million of his own money to stave off the dispersion of the Soviet scientific establishment and by pledging \$50 million to help provide areas of safety for Bosnia’s tormented civilian population. Then, in January, he lent Macedonia \$25 million to buy winter heating oil. All this is on top of the approximately \$100 million annual budget of his many foundations. Explaining, Soros said that his financial gains had simply outrun his ability to give them away—though his magnanimity surely helped smooth feathers ruffled by his enormous profit from Britain’s monetary misfortune.

Taken at face value, this is the tale of a Wall Street tycoon who made a bundle in the market and decided to give some of it back. But Soros has made rather more than a bundle—his personal worth probably approaches \$1 billion—and his philanthropic method is anything but typical. What distinguishes him in particular is the elaborate philosophy underpinning both his financial dealings and his efforts in behalf of Eastern Europe. In books such as *The Alchemy of Finance* and *Underwriting Democracy*, Soros has developed an operating theory he describes as “reflexivity.” His notion is that the movements of financial markets and of history are shaped both by the perceptions of those caught up in them and by purely objective factors; the term “reflexivity” refers to the interplay, or “feedback loop,” between events and participants’ views of them. Most often the two tend toward convergence, but frequently what Soros calls “far-from-equilibrium conditions” develop—for instance, when market trends or historical events move so wildly that they defy the comprehension of those involved in them.

Soros’s reflexivity theory can easily be seen at work in financial markets, where prices often soar or plunge on little more than psychology. But Soros says that the rise and fall of Soviet communism was much akin to a classic stock-market boom-bust cycle: the destruction of the Berlin Wall became inevitable once belief in Marxism-Leninism had seeped away and a “dynamic disequilibrium” set in.

Whatever the intellectual validity of his theories, Soros has seldom been let

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down by his intuitions as to the direction of markets or history. "I am particularly concerned with these extreme conditions when there is no tendency toward convergence," Soros tells a visitor to his Manhattan offices, as a rainstorm rattles the thirty-third-floor windows that give on a mist-enshrouded Central Park. Paintings by Hungarian artists of the interwar years hang on the walls. "I specialize in these far-from-equilibrium experiences," Soros says, adding, "This is the unifying theme."

GEORGE SOROS'S wits were sharpened during the Second World War, when he went underground in Nazi-controlled Budapest with his Jewish family. His father, Tivadar Soros, an attorney, handed down the lessons he had learned as an escaped prisoner of war adrift in the Russian civil war. "That, of course, was a formative experience, a traumatic experience, for him," Soros says. "It changed his character and his outlook on life, and he passed it on to me." George fled postwar Hungarian Stalinism in 1947 to enroll in the London School of Economics. He studied under Karl Popper, whose critique of Marx, Hegel, and other proponents of historical determinism, in *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, has had an enduring influence on Soros's thought. Soros launched his financial career in London, and pursued it in New York beginning in 1956, with stellar results—though he still describes himself as a failed philosopher.

After serving Wall Street firms as an investment-portfolio manager and analyst, Soros turned to managing the Quantum Fund, an investment vehicle that he launched (under another name) in 1969. Its performance has been spectacular: compounded annual returns of 34 percent by the end of 1992 brought the fund's assets to \$3.734 billion. An investor who placed \$10,000 in Quantum at its inception and reinvested all dividends would by last year have held the sum of \$12,982,827.62.

Soros has had financial setbacks, though. His fund posted a 22.9 percent loss in 1981, when he miscalculated the direction of interest rates and took a bath in bonds; it shed \$800 million in the 1987 market crash, which Soros had as much as predicted in *The Alchemy of Finance* earlier that year but had expected would hit first and with most force in Tokyo. High risk is a feature of "hedge"

funds like Quantum, whose managers may borrow several times the value of their holdings to place large, aggressive market bets using futures, options, and other derivative securities, while hedging, or minimizing, potential losses with other such combinations of financial instruments. But at the end of the day they must be right in their hunches, or the consequences will be devastating. "To me, it's always been a very painful process, very painful, involving great suffering, actually," Soros once told a reporter. "Because if you lose money, it's very painful, and you can't make it without the threat of losing it."

Toughness is a Soros trait. Financial peers at one time described Soros as cold and arrogant, and Quantum has come under scrutiny for allegedly joining forces with the Salomon Brothers investment bank in a 1991 Treasury market "squeeze" maneuver. But he allows that his fiercely single-minded approach to markets has mellowed in recent years, referring to a 1981 "crisis" that he describes as "a battle between me and my success—that is to say, 'Am I the slave of my success or am I the master of my destiny?'" He resolved this in part by shifting his focus to Eastern European philanthropy and activism.

Another trademark is Soros's ability to discern patterns where others see only chaos. "He sees trends globally, and he understands enough about how markets work so that he can see where to apply leverage—both intellectual and financial leverage," says Michael Lipper, the head of a Wall Street firm that tracks investment-fund performance, and a longtime Soros-watcher. "He can think out where a trend is going, and which security would be the major beneficiary of it."

Soros's bet against the British pound was one such play. On instructions from his Soros Fund Management think tank in New York, the Netherlands Antilles-based Quantum Fund (its offshore status frees it from U.S. regulation, and U.S. citizens, excepting Soros and a few officers of the fund, are not allowed to hold its shares) and related entities borrowed heavily in sterling, sold those pounds for German marks and French francs, and then locked in profits by repaying the sterling loans with devalued pounds. Soros made parallel bets in British stocks and German and French bonds to boost profits, which eventually came to \$1.3 billion. Soros

felt confident betting much on the collapse of the pound: the same process that had lifted the Iron Curtain and reunified Germany obliged the Deutsche Bundesbank to raise interest rates in order to dampen inflation, putting unbearable pressure on the recessionary British economy—and the pound.

SOROS HAS BROUGHT much the same astuteness to his efforts in Eastern Europe. Tibor Vidos, a Hungarian political consultant, says that in 1984 Soros skillfully played on the Hungarian communist government's need to service its large foreign debt. "A billionaire stockbroker from New York was exactly the right person to have good relations with," Vidos says of Soros's approach to Budapest. Soros secured quasi-official status and then funded pro-democracy thinkers. Establishing an alternative to communist institutions heartened the opposition and helped to undermine the government. Soros encouraged the emergence of democratic movements, among them the Federation of Young Democrats, a group that today is in parliamentary opposition to the conservative nationalist Hungarian government, and could take power in the 1994 elections. "That he played a significant and historic role is without doubt," Vidos says.

Soros was a presence not only in Hungary: he backed Czechoslovakia's Charter 77 human-rights group from 1981 onward, and his Open Society Fund created a Polish foundation in 1985 to support the democratic process. But he has been as quick to cut his losses in international philanthropy as he has been in finance. He shut down his Chinese foundation in 1989, upon learning that it was controlled by the Beijing security apparatus, and he disengaged from intense efforts to rescue the Soviet economy in 1990 when the Shatalin Plan for immediate free-market conversion failed to win Mikhail Gorbachev's endorsement.

In the years since the Eastern European communist regimes started toppling, in 1989, the Soros Foundations network has widened to encompass Albania, Belarus, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, and even, still, Yugoslavia. Soros has given a net

(Continued on page 37)

JULY 1993

PREVIEW

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ANGELS IN AMERICA

THE BEST OF
JACOB'S PILLOW

ANIMATION FESTIVALS
ON VIDEO

A VERY FRENCH
MOVIE

ROBERT PLANT AND THE
FATE OF NATIONS

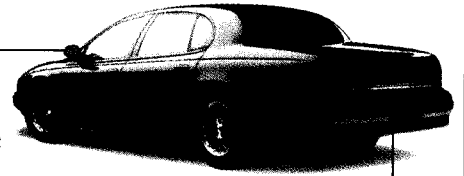
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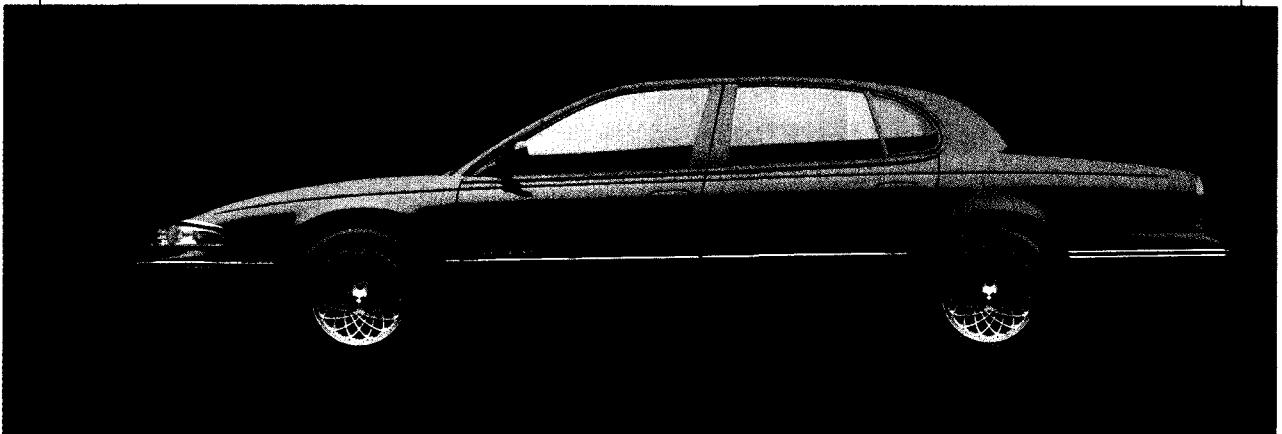
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DANCE AND THEATER

by Laura Jacobs and Austin Baer

A JOFFREY JULY

"It was high-flown, platitudinous and as extravagant of emotion as the music." That's critic John Martin in 1952 describing Léonide Massine's *Les Présages*, one of the "symphonic" ballets that had created a sensation in the 1930s (this one to Tchaikovsky's Fifth). It's a curiosity now, but an important one for those interested in ballet history. *Les Présages* is part of the Russian program the Joffrey Ballet presents on July 9 and 10 during its engagement (July 7 to 18) in San Francisco's War Memorial Opera House. Also on the program are *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*, *Parade*, and that rarely seen Soviet chestnut *Spring Waters*, a sexy, muscular May Day.

The company premiere this year is *Billboards*, a four-part evening-length ballet



Billboards, the Joffrey premiere this year

set to the music of Prince, slated for week two. Do try to see the Ashton masterpiece *Monotones II* (mixed rep program) with the dewy Elizabeth Parkinson. The ballet, set to Satie's *Trois Gymnopédies*, is deeply simple, glacially scaled, profoundly pure. Parkinson concentrates passionately, and few dancers wear a white leotard so well.

The Joffrey takes *Billboards* on to the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, in Los Angeles, July 21 to 25, and then to Orange County, July 27 to 29. —L.J.

HEART AND HEELS OF FIRE



Maria Benitez

Her eyes are charcoal slashes by El Greco, and her long hands curl like cats in the sun. Her footwork is velvety, meticulous, but explosive gestures shatter mere formalism—her knit brow is its own horizon. Maria Benitez is a flamenco dancer—famous not just for her art but for the fact that she isn't Spanish: Benitez is of American Indian and Puerto Rican descent. The newest dance her sassy company performs, *El Muro*, is about a nun with lust in her heart—Benitez herself! Maria Benitez Teatro Flamenco has its annual Santa Fe residence June 30 through September 12, and offers master classes the last week of July and first week of August to those who want to learn this fiery form of dance. (Call 505-983-8477 for information on classes; call 505-982-1237 for tickets.) —L.J.

SYMPHONY OF DRAMA

The Guthrie Theater, in Minneapolis, never omitted from the short list of America's top regional theaters, goes into its 30th-anniversary season this month with a program to make a subscriber's heart glad. The fall repertory is composed like a symphony. Ostrovski's wicked comedy of social climbing in 19th-century Russia, *Too Clever By Half*, starts it off with a roaring *prestissimo* (opens July 14). Girish Karnad's *Naga Mandala*, the company's first foray into the theater of India, promises a lyric interlude (July 16). Marivaux's *The Triumph of Love* (August 6) affords a brilliant scherzo as prelude to the grave splendors of *Othello* (October 15). Looking beyond *A Christmas Carol* and New Year's, we find Wilde's *A Woman of No Importance*, a battle of the sexes our age is finding increasingly pertinent, and *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, by the Nobel prize-winning Caribbean poet Derek Walcott. Come to think of it, Walcott alone represents the Americas, but there's beauty in that. The Guthrie's season is a season for the melting pot. We are the world. —A.B.

PILLOW TALK

The calendar at the Jacob's Pillow summer dance festival, in Becket, Massachusetts, reads like a *Who's Who* of contemporary dance, with grand masters Merce Cunningham and Paul Taylor scheduled in early July, and younger apprentice-masters popping up through August 29.

Here's six to see:

1. Taylor's *Company B*, a hit about being hit—by love and death. 2. Susan Marshall's *Kiss*, admired for its fantastic simplicity (requirements: two dancers and aerial rigging). 3. Performance as paint-



Garth Fagan Dance

APPRENTICESHIP FOR ANGELS

If you wonder what Tony Kushner was up to before he sprang forth to amaze the theater with *Angels in America*, repair to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, in Ashland, and check out *The Illusion* (July 28 to October 30). Adapted by Kushner from Pierre Corneille's strange comedy *L'Illusion Comique* (1636), it relates the tale of a father in search of his estranged son. Sent to a magician, the father is shown what has become of the fugitive since his angry departure from home. Some of the incidents delight the old man; others arouse his indignation; the sight of the young man's death in a duel drives him close to despair. But lo! another scene follows. The dead have risen, and are counting money. Good lord, the boy is an actor! It takes all the magician's eloquence to reconcile the father to this fate worse than death. The *Poetics* of Aristotle spoke, once and for the ages, of the essential action of pity and terror in tragedy. Corneille's compassionate baroque artifice shows exactly how they do what they do. How apt that Kushner's adaptation should have been the finger exercise for his own grandly theatrical, piteous and terrifying spectacle of our waning century. —A.B.

ing: art-dancers Eiko and Koma present *Wind*, performed in a pool of water. 4. Garth Fagan Dance's *Moth Dreams*; it has an original score written partly by Wynton Marsalis, and is, therefore, a must see. 5. Steve Kriekhaus on the Solo Flights program—a wiry, witty, way-out dancer/deadpan performance artist. 6. Ballet British Columbia. Company mandate: to present "ballet of our time"—i.e., the innovative, the "out there." But is it still ballet? You decide. —L.J.

Laura Jacobs is the editor in chief of Stagebill.

Austin Baer is a writer living in New York.

POPULAR MUSIC AND JAZZ

by Charles M. Young and Bob Blumenthal

RUSSELLING UP AN ALTERNATIVE UNIVERSE

When Hal Russell's death was announced at last September's Chicago Jazz Festival, thousands of fans honored his memory with 30 seconds of "creative noise," a fitting tribute to one of the music's great iconoclasts.

Russell used the entire history of jazz to create an alternative universe, then taught his system to a group of talented disciples. A professional drummer since his teens, he became a bebopper and a free-jazz pioneer before organizing his first NRG Ensemble, in the late 1970s. Soon Russell had taken up trumpet and saxophones, and demanded similar flexibility from his charges, which led to a quintet in which one bassist might shift to electric guitar or trumpet, while the other doubled trombone.



Russell the iconoclast

These myriad instrumental colors combined with Russell's absurdist's sense of humor (he liked to don Ray Charles shades and sing through a megaphone) and his fearless pushing of the sonic envelope. Somehow, the experience has been captured on CD by ECM. *The Hal Russell Story*, scheduled for release in September, is his magnum opus, a wild and wacky musical autobiography with narration that touches on Gene Krupa, Billie Holiday, hula bands, and drug addiction en route to belated recognition in Europe. Already available are *The Finnish/Swiss Tour*, a document of his 1990 Continental debut, and *Hal's Bells*, a pungent yet often delicate set of overdubbed solo performances. —B.B.

THRIVING PLANT



Robert Plant

Despite selling more records, Led Zeppelin never won the same prestige as the Rolling Stones. This had more to do with public-relations gaffes than musical worth, because Led Zeppelin was probably the most adventurous popular band of the seventies. Singer Robert Plant's eighth solo album, *Fate of Nations* (Atlantic), rates as his best (although in some ways least adventurous) since Led Zeppelin's demise, in 1980. Plant's gift is first of all physical: his high tenor wail is unique, primordial, and beyond imitation. After recent forays into sampling and deriving much of his inspiration from the "alternative" scene, Plant here returns to his countercultural roots, creating an album of shimmering beauty, lyrically and musically. Some of the songs go for adrenaline ("Calling to You"), but the acoustic stuff is what stays with you. The cover of "If I Were a Carpenter" should warm the heart of any aging hippie. Plant still loves to sing about lust, but he has expanded into politics, reviving yet another sixties tradition. He's touring Europe now and the United States in the fall. —C.M.Y.

STEELY DON

Steely Dan fans who have been yearning for a reunion since 1975 should be thrilled with the next best thing: a Donald Fagen album (his first since 1981) produced by Walter Becker. Fagen and Becker were, of course, the heart and soul of Steely Dan, and this latest collaboration is *Kamakiriad* (Reprise), a sort of concept album. The narrator is driving a steam-powered car, not speedy but containing a complete biosphere so the driver can eat hydroponically grown vegetables without ever stopping. The songs describe the car and the various adventures that befall the driver in a highly surreal future. "Tomorrow's Girls," describing an idyllic suburb invaded by alien party babes from outer space, is especially brain-bending. Musically, Fagen and Becker continue their



Donald Fagen

odd trick of being both easy listening and challenging. They lull you with their very laid-back, jazzy approach, which makes their many surprises vastly more surprising. Watch for their tour—their first in two decades—this summer. —C.M.Y.

COTTEN PICKING

Videotape has wrought a revolution in music instruction in the past few years, bringing virtuoso artists directly to anyone who owns a VCR. Although great musicians do not necessarily make great teachers, videotape can compensate: do a close-up of their hands and it doesn't matter if the teaching is good. The student just needs to press "rewind" 400 times, and eventually the technique is learned.

Stefan Grossman's Guitar Workshop has unearthed an instructional series from the late 1960s that has tremendous historic value. Produced by a rather conventional guitar teacher named Laura Weber, the shows included interviews with some of the greatest guitar innovators in an era when music journalism was far less pervasive than it is today. *John Fahey/Elizabeth Cotten: Rare Interviews and Performances From 1969* (Shanachie) combines two of these shows in a 60-minute tape that will be useful for guitarists who seek the grail of Fingerpick Genius and for journalists who want a lesson in how not to interview musicians. It will also delight anyone interested in American folk music and blues. Fahey is particularly hilarious, blithely contradicting the premise of most of Weber's questions, creating an absurdist atmosphere worthy of Samuel Beckett. Then he plays the guitar and shocks you with his eerie melodies: "The Death of the Clayton Peacock," "Red Pony," and the hymn "In Christ There Is No East or West." Fahey was (still is) an American treasure.



Quite old at the time of the interview, Elizabeth Cotten is even more surprising: she plays left-handed and taught herself to play by flipping the guitar

over but not reversing the strings, which lefties normally do. Her technique is bizarre, but she's been a model for fingerpickers for several decades now, establishing such standards as "Freight Train" and "Vestapol," among others played on this tape. Her singing is a bit shaky but she proves you don't have to be young to swing. —C.M.Y.

Charles M. Young is the executive editor of *Musician* magazine.

Bob Blumenthal is a jazz critic for *The Boston Globe* and *CD Review*.

FILM

by Henry Sheehan

WESTWARD HO!

Unusual collaborations can have unexpectedly felicitous results, as they do with *Into the West*, a grimly realistic fantasy set in the poverty-wracked cityscape and countryside of modern Ireland. The downbeat lyricism of screenwriter Jim Sheridan (who wrote and directed *My Left Foot*) and the offhand naturalism of director Mike Newell (*Enchanted April*) combine to give this parable on love's persistent demands a dry-eyed force.

Not that it couldn't have drowned in sentimentality. The story of two boys who leave their widowed father in his high-rise slum apartment and set out for the sea coast on the back of a mysterious white horse is set in the world of the Travellers, Irish gypsies who scorn settled life and



Mike Newell, director of *Into the West*

stick to their caravans. Plenty of room for clichéd Irish charm. But as the father, Gabriel Byrne embodies a scowling disappointment with the limits of modern Eire. Crushed by the death of his wife and soured on life in general, this Tinker is funding his resentments on the dole.

No wonder his two young sons—and here is some Irish charm, in the persons of Ciaran Fitzgerald and Ruaidhri Conroy—hop on board the mysterious nag their traveling grandfather says followed him home to their huge apartment block. Dad sets after them on a cross-country chase, against a landscape riven with class hatred and more muddy and gray than fertile and green, coming across remnants of his past as he goes on. Newell's calm contemplation of the tawdry is a perfect set-up for the final leap of supernatural storytelling, and the film is suddenly flooded with the emotions previously kept at arm's length. Ellen Barkin—the real-life Mrs. Byrne—has a supporting role as a fellow Traveller who forgives Byrne for his settled ways.

Henry Sheehan writes on film for The Orange County Register.

INNOVATION IN ANIMATION



Creature Comforts



The Cow, by Alexander Petrov

If you have an unslaked thirst for animation, Expanded Entertainment has something for you. Long known as the presenter of traveling animation festivals, including the Tournee of Animation and the Animation Celebration, the company now offers versions of these shows, and many other collections, on video.

The variety of subjects and treatments is stunning. From Jan Svankmajer of Czechoslovakia there are wondrously disturbing model animations, including *Darkness, Light, Darkness*, in which a man literally comes together in the confines of a one-room house, an unusual exercise in scale that projects a weird, philosophical queasiness. There's plenty of the more lighthearted conventional stuff, too, from Englishman Paul Vester's effusively colorful *Sunbeam* to Russian Alexei Karaev's *Welcome*. The American production company Olive Films, which does promos and "bumpers" for MTV and Nickelodeon, is represented by a fast and funny product reel. And the Aardman animators, who made *Creature Comforts*—a clay animation in which animals are "interviewed" at a zoo—not only are on many of the videos but have their own, as well.

Although most of the work is American and increasingly technologically sophisticated, Expanded's collection—27 different videos—represents an extraordinary range of innovative styles that may not be seen again, given the increasing primacy of computer animation and the death of European national funding. Check it out by writing for a catalogue to Expanded Entertainment, P.O. Box 25547, Los Angeles, CA 90025, or call 818-991-2884.

A HEART IN WINTER

Only the French would think of building a romance around the figure of an unprepossessing man who boasts that he can't feel any emotions at all.

But veteran filmmaker Claude Sautet brings it off with aplomb. An implausible tale about a gorgeous concert violinist (Emmanuelle Béart) who falls in love with an unmoved and unmoving violin maker (Daniel Auteuil), *Un Coeur en Hiver* is populated with an array of intelligent characters (including a far more likely object of Béart's affections, played by André Dussollier) whose commentaries provide it with a rueful, sophisticated grounding. And Sautet uses a cartographer's precision in charting the unlikely course this offbeat romance takes—or doesn't take.

Whatever else the movie is, it's quintessentially French.



Un Coeur en Hiver

KID STUFF

One classic and one politically timely animated feature will fill the theaters this summer. *Snow White* needs no introduction, but it should be noted that even though this first feature-length cartoon



P.C. animation

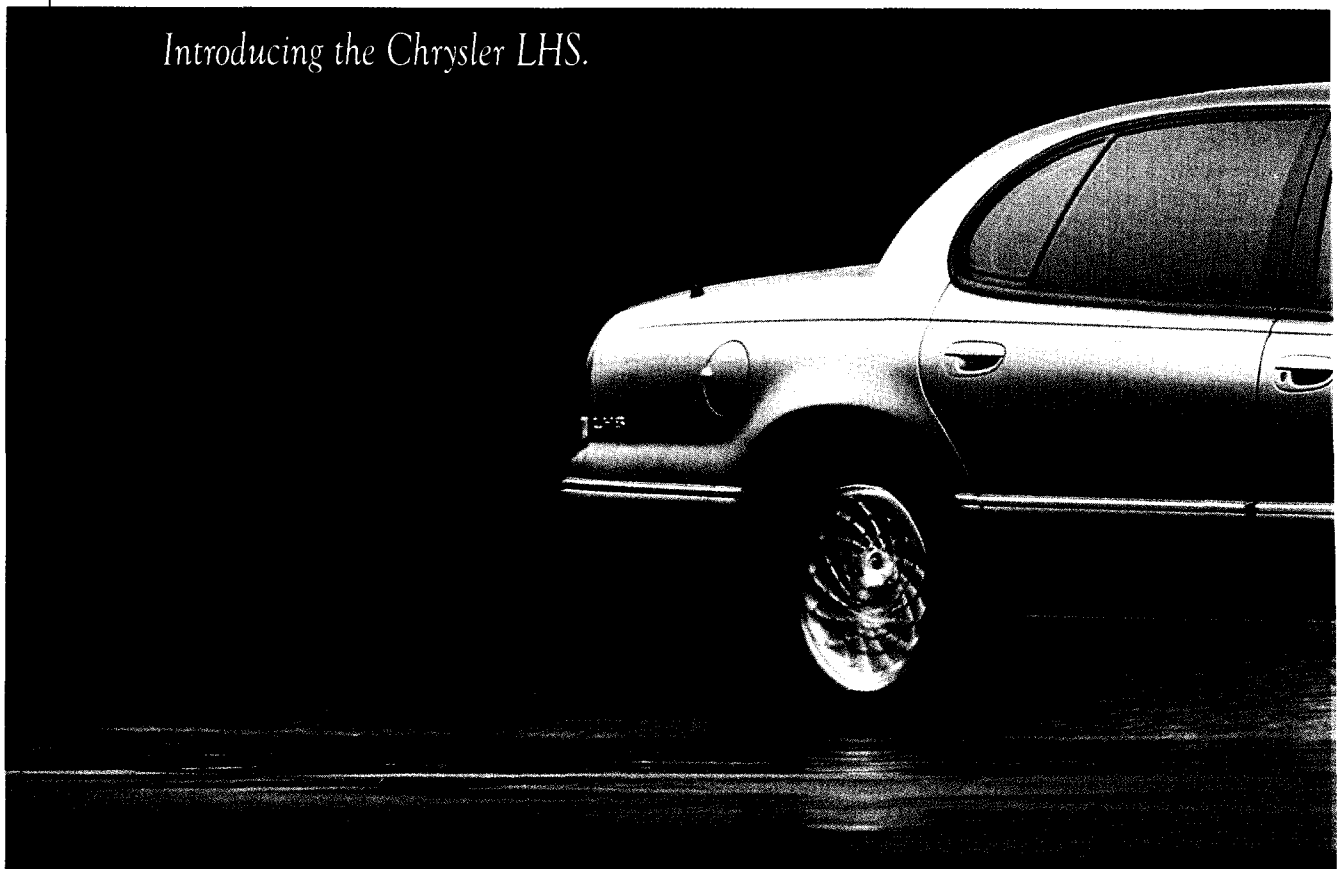
has been surpassed in technique, it has yet to be surpassed for emotional pitch or range.

Once Upon a Forest uses any number of technical shortcuts in its animations, and this shows in restricted scale of movement, a lack of depth, so-so coloring, and limited characterizations. However, it does have a very strong plot, adapted from Rae Lambert's children's stories, about a trio of animals—kids, of course—who have to find herbal medicine to save a friend sickened by a toxic spill in their forest home. The movie's almost ferocious ecological stance leaks into the storyline, giving it a propulsive energy.

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hurt, either.) Of course, you'll be doing all this while ensconced in leather-trimmed bucket seats, listening to your favorite CD on an 11-speaker Infinity Spatial-Imaging System.* Who knows? The whole experience may take you back to your youth, and

at an accelerated pace.



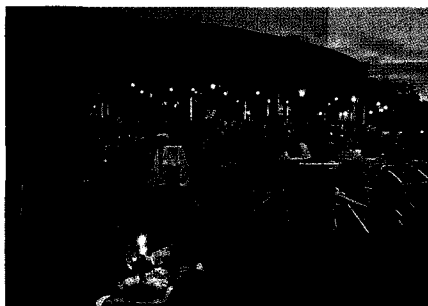
remind you of the first car you ever truly cared about. What was it? A '49 Merc? '57 Chevy? '65 Mustang? '68 Corvette? '70 "Hemi" Charger? Whatever it was, congratulations. It's back. For more information, call 1-800-4A-CHRYSLER.

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CLASSICAL MUSIC

by Austin Baer

THE LAWN IS ALIVE WITH THE SOUND OF RUSSIA



Tanglewood by twilight

Tanglewood, still the country's gold standard for summer festivals of classical music, looks to the East this year for both repertoire and personnel. Tchaikovsky (who died 100 years ago) and Rachmaninoff (who died 50 years ago) are being honored on many of the Boston Symphony Orchestra's programs. Conductor Neeme Järvi brackets Rachmaninoff's grand, tempest-swept Piano Concerto No. 2 (Garrick Ohlsson) between music from Tchaikovsky's *The Snow Maiden* and his exalted Symphony No. 5 for an evening of high romantic drama (July 10). The brooding Yuri Temirkanov offers Rachmaninoff plus Borodin (July 16). The lustrous soprano Galina Gorchakova and the spellbinding baritone Sergei Leiferkus share a recital of Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff songs (July 29) plus the final scene from Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, the latter on a program that also includes the poetic young Evgeny Kissin in his astonishing interpretation of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 (August 1). And the violist Yuri Bashmet plays Berlioz's *Harold in Italy* under John Eliot Gardiner, a maestro of fire and flair (July 25).

A KEENE MIND FOR OPERA

We do give a damn, though frankly, my dear, we've been worried. Taking over the reins of the New York City Opera from Beverly Sills, Christopher Keene gave the company a new seriousness and sense of mission. He got points from the intellectuals, but the house was still in trouble and concerned observers feared that the whole establishment would collapse. The season beginning July 28 kicks off with Puccini, Romberg, and G&S, which is hardly inspiring. But September brings the

mystic *Midsummer Marriage* of Sir Michael Tippett, a tardy New York premiere. In October—bing! bing!! bing!!! (if we're lucky), like cherries in a one-armed bandit—come three world premieres in three days, all by Americans: Ezra Laderman's *Marilyn*, as in Monroe; Lukas Foss's *Griffelkin*, about a boy-devil expelled from hell; and Hugo Weisgall's biblical *Esther*. The finale? Rodgers and Hammerstein's rare *Cinderella*, once a TV vehicle for Julie Andrews. Now we're talking.

VIVA VENGEROV!



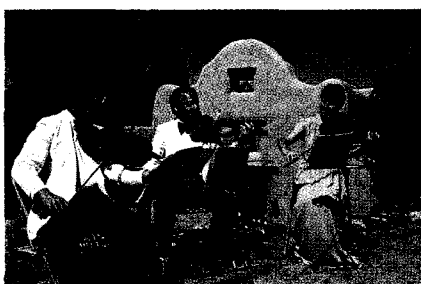
Maxim Vengerov

With characteristic respect for the working artist, *The New York Times* this spring headlined a featurette on the 18-year-old Russian-Israeli violinist Maxim Vengerov: "Yes, Another Prodigy, But Hold the Yawn." Yes, please. This young star has already been mentioned as the heir to Oistrakh by grizzled critics who know whereof they speak. Catch him if you can at Mostly Mozart, in New York (August 3 and 4), or Ravinia, outside Chicago (August 7), or give his three albums a spin (Teldec).

EN FRANÇAIS, S.V.P.

The textual history of Verdi's *Don Carlos*, commissioned by the Paris Opéra, is tangled indeed. The original five-act version, as Verdi first completed it, *en français*, would have put the premiere into overtime, which the management could not allow. Anywhere else, they might have jettisoned the 15-minute ballet, but in the French capital, that was not an option, so Verdi made other nips and tucks. For a revival at La Scala, 15 years later, he cut the whole first act and did major revisions of key scenes, still working in precise and elegant French. Of course, La Scala performed the work in Italian, and that, despite the gauche translation, is still the language in which it is most familiar. Truth to tell, the tale of the weak prince whose authoritarian father snatches his bride and co-opts his one true friend is problematic in any edition—but in its confusion it strikes fathoms deeper than many a more polished product. The Seattle Opera, blessedly more apt to set fashions than to follow them, returns to five acts, in French, for its presentation of the Paris original (July 28 through August 14).

SANTA FE GOES NATIVE



Chamberless chamber music in Santa Fe

Well, about time! The Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, now in its 21st season, has discovered America. Priding itself on its innovation, the well-loved institution is mixing up its standard fare with projects in jazz and Native American music and dance. If you feel unprepared for the latter, do not despair. Charlotte Heth, member of the Cherokee Nation and professor of anthropology, starts the ball rolling with a lecture presentation including dances performed by Pueblo groups (August 18).

Austin Baer is a writer living in New York.



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(Continued from page 28)

work offspring, the Central European University, in Budapest and Prague, a \$25 million endowment with the aim of promoting understanding among the region's fractious nationalities and educating its future leaders.

Although Soros's initial objective in Eastern Europe was political—bringing down communism—the focus of his foundations now is education, nudging history by altering perceptions. His foundations also promote plurality in the media by supporting independent publications: in Romania the Soros Foundation for an Open Society spent \$550,000 on newsprint for independent newspapers during last year's election campaign, and his Hungarian foundation subsidizes the newspaper *Magyar Narancs* (*Hungarian Orange*), a weekly in tune with the Young Democrats.

Ironically, communism's demise has complicated Soros's task. Funding decisions are tougher than when simple dissident status was an applicant's key qualification. Soros's dollars buy less and less as local currencies strengthen and Western prices arrive. More worrisome, Soros has become the target of anti-Semitic broadsides in *Magyar Fórum*, a weekly published by the far-right wing of the governing Hungarian Democratic Forum. In one virulent attack, published in September of last year, an HDF parliamentarian disparaged Soros's role in the 1989 democratic transition, calling it "a self-engineered coup by cosmopolitans," the term "cosmopolitan" being a long-standing communist euphemism for "Jew." The article was titled "Termites Are Devouring Our Nation—Reflections on the Soros Regime, the Soros Empire." In Romania, as well, Soros has been maligned. Ultra-nationalists based in the ethnically mixed city of Cluj, in Transylvania, vilify Soros as a Hungarian infiltrator, and a parliamentarian representing Romania's Democratic Front for National Salvation has demanded that Soros's foundation be expelled.

Such attacks have put the various foundations somewhat on the defensive, even as their sense of mission has intensified. "We're very proud of the enemies we make, frankly," says Sandra Pralong, Soros's Romanian-born co-chair for the foundation in that country, "because the people who are most threatened by us are the ones who are most damaging for Romania." Soros

"reminds the political circles in this country that the time when a society or a country could live as an [isolated] entity is over," says András Kereszty, the executive editor of *Népszabadság*, Hungary's largest daily newspaper. "Everything is integrated in the modern world; he represents this interrelatedness."

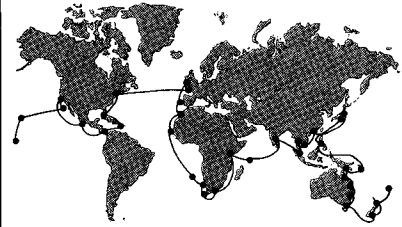
The Soros foundations taken together amount to a major regional institution influencing a generation of opinion-makers. The index of the Soros Foundations directory lists 641 names. The Hungarian television journalist Janos Horvat reckons that one in ten members of his country's first post-communist Parliament have had some Soros connection. For many in Eastern Europe, Soros represents success, reform, and hope. Ethan Klingsberg, an American lawyer who is the executive director of a Soros offshoot that helps new governments draft constitutions, recalls a meeting in Kazakhstan in January between Soros representatives and a group of independent intellectuals. "They had this club," Klingsberg recalls, "and they wanted to name it for him." Soros inspires fervor among his staff, too.

FOR ALL THE undeniable progress to which he has contributed, Soros's outlook on the former Eastern bloc is decidedly dark. He fears that it may have shaken off communism only to succumb to nationalist dictatorships, and that "what used to be the Soviet Union may become a black hole that may eventually swallow up civilization." Soros initially envisioned his foundations as a short-term venture. He now says that "things haven't worked out, they're not going to work out, and so you've got a much longer period while I will need to be engaged." Yet he retains considerable relish for the task, which he says affords him more satisfaction than making money ever has.

This brings to mind a revealing story that Soros once told an associate about his wartime years in hiding. Holed up in a Budapest cellar at one point, he passed long hours with his father and brother playing games, a small cache of candies being the stakes. He and his brother saved up the sweets they won—but Tivadar Soros ate his winnings. "The point is that you have to do something with the bonbons," Soros said. "You can't just play with them and you can't just eat them all."

—Brendan Murphy

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Activist Jon Parker exchanging needles illegally in New York in 1991, after Mayor David Dinkins canceled the city's first needle program

PUBLIC HEALTH

Needles and Race

Critical opposition to needle-exchange programs as a means to curb the AIDS virus has come from black leaders, and for disturbing reasons

MORE AND MORE, AIDS in America is a needle-borne epidemic centered in predominantly black and Latino ghettos, affecting intravenous-drug users, their sexual partners, and their children. Approximately a third of the 253,000 AIDS cases in the United States have been linked directly or indirectly to drug injection, and intravenous-drug users are the fastest-growing at-risk group. That they share needles tainted with HIV is the main reason for this. Before the advent of AIDS, researchers who studied the practice of sharing needles typically described it as a ritual of solidarity among a despised segment of the population. Sometimes, now that many users have learned how AIDS is transmitted, it amounts to a tacit suicide pact among those who will give

up anything for the pleasure of a fix. But needle sharing has become mostly an act of desperation by those without ready access to clean needles.

Research suggests that the adoption of needle-exchange programs in the United States could save tens of thousands of lives. Preliminary findings from a study being carried out at Yale University suggest that New Haven's needle-exchange effort has slowed the spread of HIV without causing, as feared, a rise in drug use. Similar conclusions are reported in Tacoma, Washington, which has the nation's longest-running legal program. Such evidence, combined with data from abroad, where needle exchange is well established, has led the National Commission on AIDS to endorse needle exchange. The National Academy of Sciences has for many years endorsed needle-exchange trials.

Nonetheless, most American politicians and policy-makers dismiss the idea of making clean needles available to drug users as misguided and dangerous—as “sending the wrong message” in the midst of a war on drugs. American law reflects this hostility: a doctor's prescription is needed to buy needles in many states, and in almost every state needles are covered by drug-paraphernalia statutes. Tacitly and unintentionally the United States has become the control group in an international investi-

gation of the effectiveness of needle exchange. In a few locales in the United States—among them Seattle, Boulder, and the state of Hawaii—needle exchange has been introduced. But with the notable—and very recent—exception of New York City, none is situated at an epicenter of the twin calamities of AIDS and intravenous-drug use.

Why has there been such resistance to a program that is known to work, and that has been successfully implemented in other industrialized democracies?

THE NATIONAL debate over needle exchange has been mostly a whites-only affair, with liberal public-health officials and researchers pitted against conservative politicians, prosecutors, and police officers. Much less attention has been paid to the widespread antagonism within the black community, where many politicians and ministers whose constituencies have been decimated by drugs and AIDS have been vocal opponents. But that opposition is probably the primary reason why the cities most affected by the epidemic have resisted needle exchange. It has also influenced policy at the national level. In an odd political coupling, black opposition to needle exchange found its staunchest ally in Republican Senator Jesse Helms, of North Carolina, who promoted legislation that prevents cities



from spending federal dollars on needle exchange—or even on the distribution of bleach to sterilize needles.

Understanding why such opposition exists means paying attention to a spokesman like the Congregational minister Graylan Ellis-Hagler, one of the most vociferous critics of needle exchange. In the late 1980s, Ellis-Hagler says, there were 2,500 recovering drug addicts in his community ministry in Boston's Roxbury neighborhood, and those recovering addicts "pushed me to change from a pro to an anti position." Jon Parker, who since 1988 has been jailed thirty times in eight states for distributing needles to drug users, came to Boston in 1986, but when Parker's National AIDS Brigade tried setting up a needle-exchange center four years later, the police forcibly shut it down after picketing by Ellis-Hagler, other community leaders, and some recovering addicts. Reportedly, during the standoff some of the protesters threatened to firebomb the center but were talked out of doing so. Violence did erupt, however, when Ellis-Hagler punched Parker after a fierce screaming match. Here is Ellis-Hagler's view of the situation: "First they [the white establishment] push drugs in the community. They cripple the community politically and economically with drugs. They send the males to jail. Then someone hands out needles to maintain the dependency. Meanwhile, grandmothers live in fear of their own children because of what white society made them become—crack addicts, throwaways."

In the world that Ellis-Hagler inhabits, there is a surprisingly widespread belief in the existence of a strategy for decimating the black population. Benjamin Bowser, a sociology professor at California State University at Hayward, has asserted publicly that drugs were given away in Newark and Harlem and Watts during the months following the riots of the mid-1960s, in order to create docility on the streets and a market for heroin. When methadone, a synthetic narcotic, began to be used to treat heroin addiction in the 1960s, drug-law reformers and their allies, mostly white liberals, viewed it as a major advance. But many black leaders criticized methadone as a white man's drug that would enslave black men by perpetuating addiction and rendering them impotent. The infamous Tuskegee syphilis experiment, in which researchers for forty years denied

a group of black men access to treatment in order to trace the course of the disease, remains a potent symbol of white exploitation and a source of black distrust. With drugs, violence, and AIDS reducing the life expectancy of black men in ghettos to levels below those in Third World countries, black community leaders worry aloud that an entire generation of black males will have been wiped out by the year 2000.

The fact that some scientists trace the origins of AIDS to Africa has also fueled the anger of black leaders, who fear that those among whom AIDS is now spreading fastest will wind up being blamed for the disease. A 1988 report delivered to the Centers for Disease Control by the Black Coalition Caucus, a group organized in the context of a CDC conference on AIDS and minorities, declared, "In no way will American blacks permit this deadly AIDS epidemic to be blamed on or attributed to the existence of black people." The caucus's view was that "blacks have come to fear that research scientists have exposed the race to a deadly 'Andromeda Strain.'" Stephen B. Thomas and Sandra Crouse Quinn, researchers at the University of Maryland, have investigated public opinion among blacks on questions involving the AIDS epidemic. In a survey of black churchgoers, Thomas and Quinn found that only one in five trusts government reports on AIDS and that two thirds entertain the possibility that "AIDS is a form of genocide against the Black race." The study also found that 38 percent of black college students in Washington, D.C., believe that "there is some truth in reports that the AIDS virus was produced in a germ warfare laboratory"; another 26 percent said they were "unsure."

Needle-exchange programs are widely seen by those given to speculating about conspiracies against blacks as a cheap and cynical substitute for the drug-treatment programs that governments persistently refuse to pay for. Drugs, they correctly note, have brought not only AIDS but also crime, family breakup, tuberculosis, and other epidemics to the black community, and drug abuse itself does, of course, take lives. Who is to say which of these threats should be the top priority? If science supports the policy of needle exchange, then science is suspect. In 1990 New York City's first black public-health commissioner, Woodrow A. Myers Jr., stated that he was "ideologically

opposed" to needle exchange and could conceive of no evidence that would change his mind. "There's a higher goal than the reduction of transmission of HIV, and that goal is the elimination of use of illegal narcotics by injection, period." Although needle exchange might slow the spread of the AIDS virus in the short run, black opponents have claimed that over the long haul it merely perpetuates a deadly system. In the long shadow cast by Tuskegee it has become possible for blacks to believe that AIDS, heroin, and violence together represent a white man's conspiracy. Benjamin Ward, at the time New York City's police commissioner, told *The New York Times* in 1988, "As a black person, [I] have a particular sensitivity to doctors conducting experiments, and they too frequently seem to be conducted against blacks." The former New York city councilman Hilton B. Clark, of Harlem, has called needle distribution "genocide," and has said that the architect of New York's first needle-exchange program "should be arrested for murder and drug distribution."

TO BE SURE, the black community is deeply divided on this issue. Those blacks, mostly young and many of them gay, who identify more with ACT-UP-style activism than with the black churches regard opposition to needle exchange by establishment black leaders as a deadly act of denial. They, too, have sometimes resorted to references to genocide.

As Harlon Dalton, a Yale law professor, argues, blacks are trapped in an awful quandary: if they acknowledge the full dimensions of the drug problem, they risk being treated as a population of junkies, a degenerate culture. WHEN WILL ALL THE JUNKIES DIE SO THE REST OF US CAN GO ON LIVING? reads a sign hung on lampposts in Harlem. But blacks also know that addicts aren't strangers—are in fact their own sons and daughters.

Recently there has been some rethinking on the matter. Although Ellis-Hagler and other ministers remain opposed to needle exchange, charges of genocide are much less frequently voiced. Some influential black politicians, notably big-city mayors, have come to call for needle-exchange programs. In 1988 Baltimore's mayor, Kurt L. Schmoke, stood alone when he called not only for needle exchange but

I

BEING TORN APART
BY WILD ANIMALS.

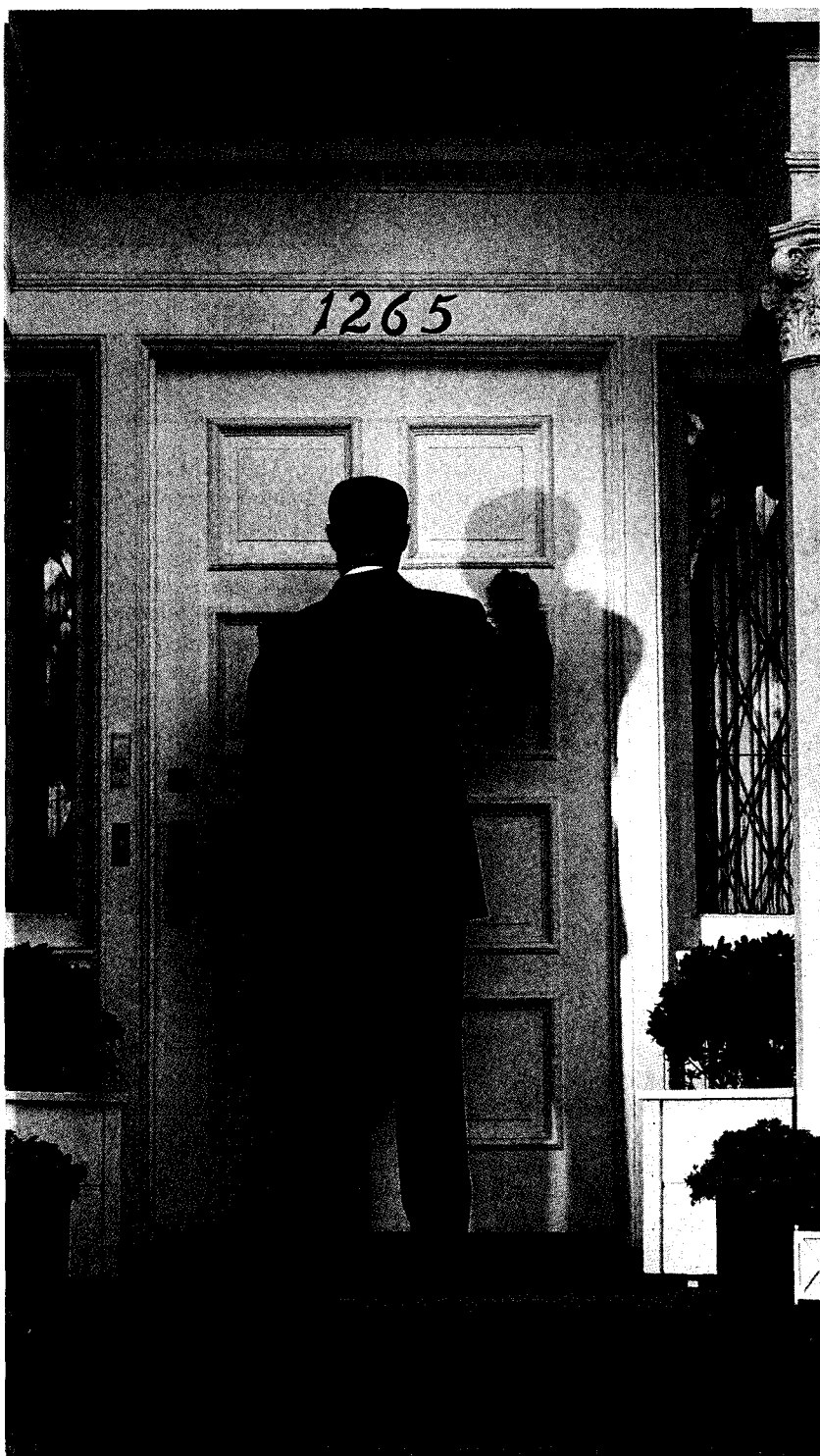
2

BEING BOILED
ALIVE IN ACID.

3

TALKING ABOUT
DISABILITY INSURANCE.

(Most people would choose the first two.)



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also for debate on the decriminalization of drugs. Since then David Dinkins, of New York City; Sharon Pratt Kelly, of Washington D.C.; and John C. Daniels, of New Haven, among others—all liberal leaders—have endorsed efforts to provide drug users with sterile syringes. This makes it harder for other minority leaders to wield the charge of racism.

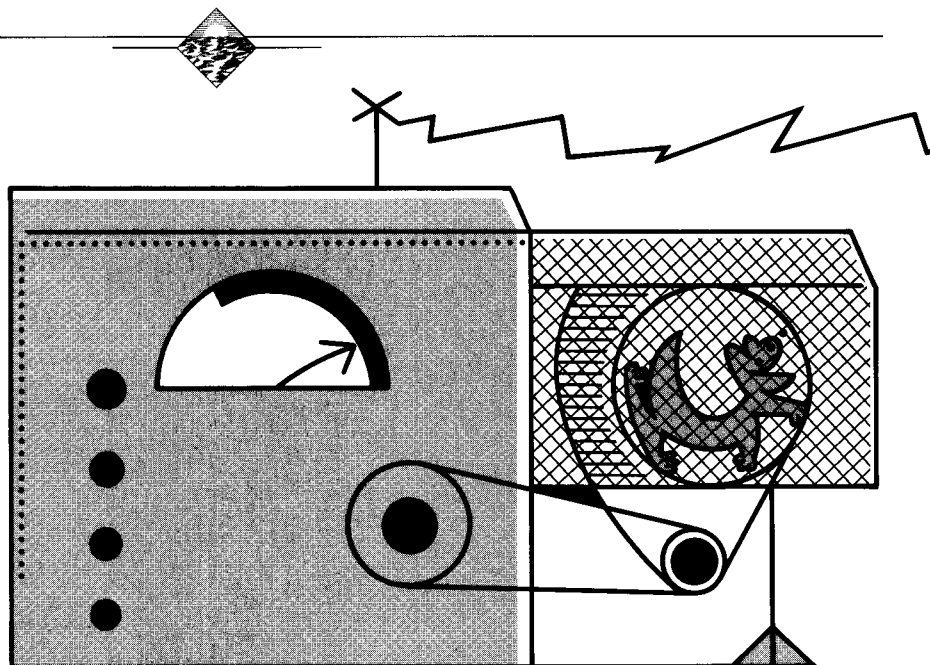
Such changes of heart, rather than any perceptible shift in federal policy or in the attitudes of law-enforcement officers, are the primary reason why the number of needles exchanged annually has quadrupled in the past two years, to a cumulative total of approximately two million by 1992. To put that figure in some perspective, it should be noted that there are more than a million intravenous-drug users in the United States. In Amsterdam, a city with 3,000 addicts, 700,000 needles were distributed in 1992 alone.

FIVE YEARS AGO Stephen C. Joseph, then New York City's health commissioner, issued this warning about addicts and AIDS: "We shouldn't delude ourselves. It is not a static situation. We don't have that much time." Three years before that, in 1985, with Amsterdam's needle-exchange program already up and running, Joseph's predecessor, David Sencer, had declared that by refusing addicts access to clean needles "we are condemning large numbers of addicts to death from AIDS." The consequences of delay are now palpably apparent. Among New York City addicts who share needles, the HIV-infection rate now stands at about 60 percent.

Needle-exchange programs are still worth implementing, as are the drug-treatment programs that ought to accompany them. But, obviously, needle exchange cannot hope to be as effective now as it once might have been. There is no making up for the time—almost a decade—that has been lost.

The struggle to make clean needles available to drug addicts, which at last shows modest signs of momentum, reveals the extent to which some conservative leaders and those who have suffered most from the legacy of America's racial history have become unwitting allies, forestalling the implementation of policies that are broadly desirable. It is a formula for paralysis, and in the case of AIDS it has proved deadly.

—David L. Kirp and Ronald Bayer



ENERGY

The Future of Electric Power

Deregulation has come to the semi-monopolistic world of public utilities, with potentially far-reaching consequences for the environment and for energy efficiency, cost, and investors as well

IN THE LITTLE town of Doswell, Virginia, a futuristic power plant recently went into operation. Driven by natural gas, the facility uses less fuel than comparable stations, thanks to an advanced process called combined-cycle generation. It causes minimal pollution, discharging no water and only trace emissions to the air. A visit is an eerie experience, for even when the plant's turbines are running at full throttle, it's difficult to tell that the facility is operating. Tricks of acoustic engineering mask the deafening re-sound characteristic of power generation; no clouds of anything rise, not even steam.

But technical innovations are not what sets the plant apart, since progress in fuel conservation and environmental regulation assures that all new power stations will be cleaner and more efficient than those they supplant. What's futuristic about the Doswell generating station is that it is owned by a subsidiary of Mitsubishi and oper-

ated by Bechtel. The plant is an independent, unregulated enterprise making free-market juice.

Power is one of America's leading commercial sectors, nearly as large in revenue as the airline and telecommunications industries combined. Historically it is also among the most tightly regulated of commercial activities. Yet for all the ballyhoo that accompanied the decontrol of air and phone service, few people are aware that the electricity business is being opened up too. Over about a decade small steps have been taken in the direction of power deregulation. Last fall Congress dropped altogether most controls on new electricity production.

Whereas airline and phone deregulation produced mainly changes in pricing policies, the eventual result of utility deregulation may be utter upheaval in the economics of electricity, perhaps to the point that individual homes unhook from the grid and make their own power. Along the way may come energy savings, lower rates for industry and higher rates for homes, a second wind for nuclear power, commercial-scale renewable energy—and bankruptcies of apparently rock-solid utility companies.

Electricity is being deregulated at the same time that utility planners are perplexed by a central question: whether the United States needs more generating capacity, to avoid future brown-outs, or less, because conservation will reduce demand. Whenever it dawns on the public consciousness that the power monopoly is ending, attention will focus on whether electricity rates rise or fall. The more important question



may be what effect the unleashing of market forces will have on generation and consumption.

THE ELECTRICITY industry began with a period of intense competition. Around the turn of the century Thomas Edison and George Westinghouse, each hoping to become the John D. Rockefeller of the next great energy industry, engaged in a spirited "Battle of the Currents." The two men bankrolled private power plants in various locations around the country. Aggressive marketing and price wars were common.

Westinghouse defeated Edison on technical grounds when Westinghouse's favored concept, alternating current, was embodied in the first grand hydroelectric dam, built in 1895 at Niagara Falls—a project that captivated a nation then fascinated by material progress. But neither man succeeded in establishing a Standard Watts to emulate Rockefeller's Standard Oil. As it became clear that the new form of power would be universal, lawmakers decided that the excesses of the oil trusts could be avoided if electricity were tightly regulated.

Most economists agreed. Like telephone service, electricity seemed to fit the notion of the "natural" monopoly, which combines exemption from competition with government-controlled prices. The power business thus became what securities analysts call low-risk, low-yield. Rate regulation implied that no utility would ever be a boom stock, but also that no dividend would be missed—a situation that is already changing and is likely to change further now that the industry is being deregulated. The system succeeded handsomely on the key measure, producing dependable power at costs among the lowest in the Western world. As a result, for decades there was no serious challenge to the concept of monopoly electricity.

In the 1970s, however, the consensus began to erode. First, deregulation was the hot topic of academic economics. Attempting to explain why GNP growth had slowed, a wide spectrum of intellectuals locked on to regulatory stagnation. Airline, telephone, trucking, banking, and rail decontrols were soon set in motion.

Second, by the 1970s utilities had begun to violate a premise of natural-monopoly logic, that of declining cost. Roughly from the days of Edison and Westinghouse until the 1970s the real-dollar cost of electricity fell regularly. This picture changed when utilities went overboard for nuclear plants. Suddenly the cost of watts began accelerating well ahead of inflation.

Third, the 1970s was the decade of energy shocks. Many people began to question the underlying mechanism by which utilities were paid: the more power sold, the more profit realized. This is a formula for ever-increasing fuel combustion, which after 1973 no longer seemed synonymous with progress.

In a sense it is a blessing that many reactor projects of the 1970s ended up as white elephants. They did because fossil-fuel supplies did not run out, which would have been much more harmful to society than a few wasted investments at places like Shoreham, on Long Island, and several reactors begun but never finished by the Tennessee Valley Authority. But the sequence of events that led to this point set the utility industry up for a fall. Once utility managers began to make significant blunders about matters like nuclear expansion, the public perception of them changed, from that of far-seeing technocrats to that of fat cats with legal sanction to reach into people's pockets. Economists argued that the presumptuous utilities needed competitors.

In 1978 Congress passed a law known by the acronym PURPA, which fostered experiments in nonutility power. PURPA specified that independents building unconventional power plants could sell electricity to utilities at a price that usually worked out to be high enough to make it attractive to enter the power business.

In the sort of legislative asterisk that can ultimately overpower the rest of a bill, PURPA also required that utilities buy from "cogeneration" facilities: fossil-fuel-fired plants where heat that would otherwise be vented as exhaust is recaptured for factory-process use. Cogen plants—which contractors began to build in many places across the na-

tion—are basically power stations with steam lines attached. In the course of building them independent companies discovered that no magic wand was required to construct an electricity-generating system, and they began to cast their eyes on the rest of the business. A pro-competition lobby grew that included Bechtel and other heavyweight firms.

The executives of every industry facing deregulation have been able to restrain their enthusiasm for the process, and the power business has been no different from the rest. The first exception to this rule was William Berry, who at the time was the head of Virginia Electric and Power Company (Vepco). Ten years ago some policy intellectuals were proposing the abolition of all controls on power, and may the best wires win. Berry thought that this sort of textbook laissez-faire notion would backfire in the muddle of the real world. He says, "I knew the academics could show that power was more expensive than it would be in the presence of competition. But some of the solutions being discussed were the kind that work only in a college economics course."

Berry proposed that the production of power be deregulated but the distribution (the power lines) remain controlled. Anyone would be free to build a generating plant; its output would be sold to the highest bidder and "wheeled" through the grid wherever desired. But before delivery to customers, that power would pass to a utility whose rates were set by a public commission. This arrangement, Berry thought, would prevent independent producers from snatching up the largest industrial customers, leaving residential customers stuck with the cost of general overhead. Under the Berry plan utilities would become mainly service concerns. They could still make their own power, but only if they managed to be competitive, since regulatory commissions would direct them to shop for the best price.

Considering deregulation inevitable, Berry decided in the mid-1980s to conduct an experiment. Through legal sleight of hand he arranged for a bidding contest for new Vepco generating capac-



ity to be open to all comers. One big contract was awarded to an independent later bought out by Mitsubishi, a transaction that was the origin of the Doswell station. In effect Berry had staged a unilateral self-deregulation. Other power companies were furious.

Berry maintained that his actions were in the interests of consumers. If private companies put up the capital for new plants, Vepco would not force its customers to share the risk; nor would it face the ire of utility commissioners and Wall Street if the projects went over budget. In self-deregulating, Berry also bowed to a reality of modern life: the not-in-my-back-yard syndrome. The syndrome is acute for regulated entities like utilities, since public-hearing requirements can mean years of delay even for innocuous ventures. Berry tired of taking this heat. "When we try to site a plant, we are the big bad utility coming to town," Berry says. "When an independent power producer comes in, the image is that of a plucky underdog. There's an automatic public-relations edge."

A few other utilities took steps toward self-deregulation. Some awarded contracts to AES Systems, a new firm jockeying with Mitsubishi and others to be the first national power wholesaler. Three years ago Public Service of Indiana petitioned for permission to sell power out of state at market prices, not regulated rates. This petition in effect formally asked the federal government to end price controls on electricity. At about the same time, Cleveland Public Power began to compete for industrial customers of the nearby Cleveland Electric Illuminating. Years before, Cleveland Electric had settled a fight over a nuclear operating license by agreeing to transmit power from other sources to Cleveland Public, which in the early 1990s began buying surplus power from out-of-state utilities and undercutting the Cleveland Electric price by several cents per kilowatt-hour, a significant margin.

WHEN WORD of big electricity price cuts began to circulate, corporate power consumers responded by agitating in Washington for more of the same. Late last year de-

regulation of new power generation passed in both houses of Congress by wide margins, eliciting almost no controversy.

Once formal decontrol of generation begins, it may be only a matter of time before other aspects of the power monopoly decay. Douglas Houston, an economics professor at the University of Kansas, has predicted that public-utility regulation "eventually will crumble under its own weight."

What effect decontrol will have on electric rates is unclear. Most analysts expect society's net cost for electricity to fall. But that does not guarantee direct benefits for the typical homeowner. Telephone deregulation cut large-business and long-distance rates while residential costs rose, because market forces channeled the savings in the direction of bulk purchasers.

Already utilities must price industrial power low enough that factories do not build their own generators. (Even now factories are free to "self-generate," so long as they don't sell excess power to another customer.) As it becomes practical for mid-sized commercial customers such as office parks and apartment blocks to make their own power, these accounts may win rate favors too, leaving more overhead to shift onto residential accounts. A new equilibrium may be reached only when individual homeowners can threaten to go it alone if they don't like the price—a possibility I'll get to.

Another anxiety about deregulation is environmental. Most utilities have decent environmental records, at least in the sense that they ploddingly comply with whatever the law requires: under regulation, pollution-control costs were easy to pass along to consumers. In some cases utilities have been environmental leaders. American Electric Power, in Ohio, is underwriting the development of the "E Lamp," a bulb designed to run on very little juice. Pacific Gas and Electric, in California, the nation's largest utility, has transformed itself from a company that built the Diablo Canyon nuclear station near a fault line into the nation's largest user of wind power.

Some environmentalists think that decades of hammering utilities over

the head with lawsuits and bad press has finally paid off: power companies now realize they can operate cleanly, and are committed to doing so. At the moment of this breakthrough comes deregulation, which may make it harder for utilities to pass along pollution-control costs and may create competitive pressure that may cause environmental protection to be sacrificed in the interests of profit. For this reason the environmental community, once ardently anti-utility, has qualms about power deregulation, though it might seem a deliciously satisfying revenge against the crowd responsible for acid rain and Three Mile Island.

Yet there are reasons to suppose that power deregulation will have a positive environmental impact. One is that new producers are mostly building plants that burn natural gas, the cleanest fossil fuel. New power companies are also choosing to build numerous mid-sized plants rather than a few huge facilities, which is more in keeping with conservation logic than big expansions, which give utilities an internal need to promote power consumption. Finally, free-wheeling market battles to generate power at the least cost are likely to inspire breakthroughs in energy efficiency, and energy efficiency, for both producers and consumers, is by several ways of thinking the most promising environmental "growth area."

So promising, in fact, that some doubt whether any new electricity generation is needed. This leads to the great question of the power business—whether conservation is better than new production.

IN A 1976 ARTICLE in *Foreign Affairs* magazine, the physicist Amory Lovins declared that conservation could reduce energy needs so spectacularly that oil would not run out and energy prices would plummet as well. The article appeared at a time when energy doomsaying was the height of fashion; there were complaints that *Foreign Affairs* was off its rocker to dignify such unrealistic contentions. Today Lovins's predictions seem conservative. Gasoline sells for less in real-dollar terms than it did in the 1960s. Since Lovins's article was pub-

lished, total U.S. energy use per constant dollar of GNP has declined 23 percent.

Recently the efficiency trend that began with gasoline has caught up to electricity. Despite the spread of air-conditioning, growth in demand for electricity has slowed to around two percent annually, with declines experienced in some parts of the country. And Lovins now predicts electricity savings that are in some ways more outlandish than the gasoline savings he anticipated in 1976.

Lovins believes that the standard strategy of generating ever more power is backward. The focus should instead be on rendering the user of electricity ever more efficient and then reducing power generation to the level that customers actually need. This notion has acquired the clunky name "demand-side management" (DSM).

Lovins thinks that the United States could support its industrial base and lifestyle using just 30 percent of current electricity-generating capacity, with the conservation investment needed to produce these savings available at a long-term cost of less than one cent per kilowatt-hour. Since new generating capacity costs about six cents per kilowatt-hour, investments decreasing the demand for power are dramatically less expensive than investments in new production, to say nothing of the fact that resources are conserved and pollution avoided.

Lovins proposes not sacrifice but technical advances and free-market efficiency. Americans will use fewer watts yet continue to enjoy "hot showers and cold beers," in his phrase.

Most utilities now have DSM efforts, some of them substantial: Consolidated Edison, which serves New York City, plans to invest \$4 billion over the next fifteen years to promote conservation. Some power companies have a financial incentive to favor DSM. Until recently utilities could improve returns mainly by selling more watts; the utility that urged consumers to conserve was almost violating its fiduciary responsibility to shareholders. In the early 1980s, though, rate commissions began to experiment with programs under which many companies whose



UNCONVENTIONAL WISDOM

They're The McLaughlin Group. Each with a view that's contentious and contagious. (clockwise from left) Jack Germond, Clarence Page, John McLaughlin, Eleanor Clift, Morton Kondracke and Fred Barnes.

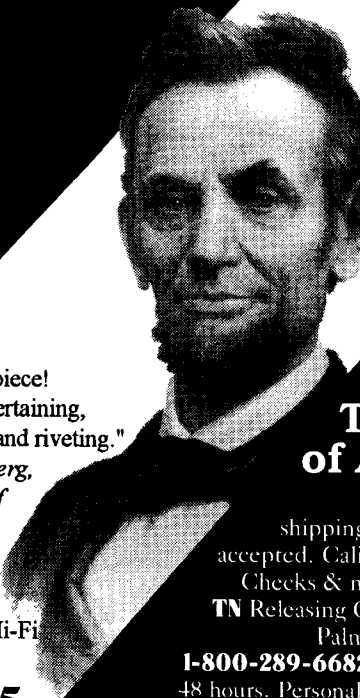
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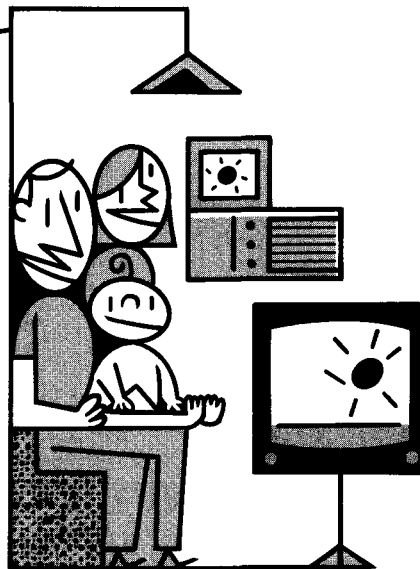
Produced & Directed by Gary L. Beebe. Written by William Hanchett.

customers became more efficient kept a percentage of the amount that those customers would otherwise have spent. Such deals, structured according to eye-glazing formulas arrived at by computer, allow the seller and the buyer of electricity to share the benefits of reduced consumption. And some power companies find DSM expedient as well as profitable. Between bond-market wariness of utility expansion and local barriers to locating large facilities, any way to avoid new construction suddenly looks appealing.

To a point, demand-side management and deregulation are in conflict. Advocates of DSM tends to presume that the United States already has too much generating capacity; deregulation presumes that new companies ought to jump into the business of generating electricity. But in a sense the ideas work in concert, because DSM gives utilities reason to be fuel-efficient, and fuel-efficiency will be essential to fending off new challengers. What's more, no matter how much conservation is realized, it will remain necessary to build new power plants to replace aging facilities—necessary and good for society, because the new plants will be cleaner and more efficient. Free competition to build and operate those replacement plants may be desirable regardless of how energy use changes.

When DSM programs are put into effect, they may fail to produce the anticipated savings. Margaret Fels, a Princeton researcher, finds that such efforts often yield half the expected benefits. Power companies that assume that DSM will allow them to postpone new generating plants indefinitely, Fels fears, may be in for a rude jolt.

But suppose Lovins is too optimistic by a factor of two. That still leaves him the most attractive energy news of the 1990s, rendering him a sort of Professor Harold Hill of kilowatts, whose sales pitch is excessive but whose merchandise is nevertheless good for River City. Lovins calculates that if America as a whole simply improved electricity efficiency at the actual rate achieved in southern California during the 1980s, national power demand would fall by several percentage points annually even as the GNP rose.



IT'S LIKELY THAT the coming decades will see the wide application of several innovations that will reduce power consumption or increase generation efficiency. One is the E Lamp, which provides luminescence with radio waves. If perfected, the E Lamp should cost less to use than currently available compact fluorescent bulbs and should fit any existing fixture—an important consideration. Air-conditioning, too, may make an efficiency leap if, as expected, machines are perfected that cool without compressors, the big power draw in conventional units.

As for generation, advances in plant design have pushed from about 30 percent to about 43 percent the thermal efficiency (roughly analogous to gas mileage) of fossil-fuel-fired power plants. As much as 55 percent may be possible for the next generation of power stations. If electricity demand is cut at the same time that the fuel required to produce power declines, substantial net energy savings will occur.

Deregulation may revive nuclear power, in the form of new reactors that incorporate passive safety features such as emergency cooling water fed by gravity, available even if all pumps fail. Under deregulation, reactor manufacturers such as General Electric and Westinghouse may build their own power stations and offer the electricity produced on the open market. In the current political climate a private-sector firm may have the best chance of winning licensing approval to open a nuclear station, because voluntary shareholders, not ratepayers, will be on the hook for any

cost overruns. Nuclear power, a high-risk but potentially high-return endeavor, should benefit from divorce from the low-risk, low-return realm of the public utility. By the early twenty-first century solar-electric conversion may become common. Assuming that affordable converters are devised, houses in the southwestern United States might satisfy all their power needs from roof-mounted solar systems, and houses in other areas of the country might make half their power.

Then there's the fuel cell. This device is the ideal generator, making electricity from hydrogen and oxygen, with water as the by-product. Fuel cells have, however, proved expensive to build, and the hydrogen they consume is derived from natural gas, a losing proposition from the standpoint of overall efficiency. Advances in fuel-cell manufacturing now make it imaginable that costs will fall to a level at which hotels or office complexes might generate their own electricity with fuel cells; someday home fuel cells may appear. And some researchers, such as the Princeton physicists Joan Ogden and Robert Williams, think that a practical supply of hydrogen will be found. They envision, for example, vast fields of solar-powered converters in unpopulated areas which would separate hydrogen from water and ship the hydrogen back to cities.

Imagine a home with solar-electric panels on the roof and, out by the garage, a small fuel cell suggesting the Mr. Fusion appliance of *Back to the Future*. Such a structure might kiss the power grid good-bye, making its own electricity the way houses now make their own heat and cool air.

Our future house would still require a hydrogen supplier, but that company might be only one step up in stature from the local pool-cleaning service, the central electric utility having by this point crumbled under its own weight. Economic theory says that to stave off this day power companies should make electricity cheaper and electric services more user-friendly, so that consumers won't mind staying on the grid. In other words, utilities should compete not just with each other but also with the prospect of being put out of business altogether. For an industry that has gone nearly a century with no competition whatsoever, that prospect is bracing.

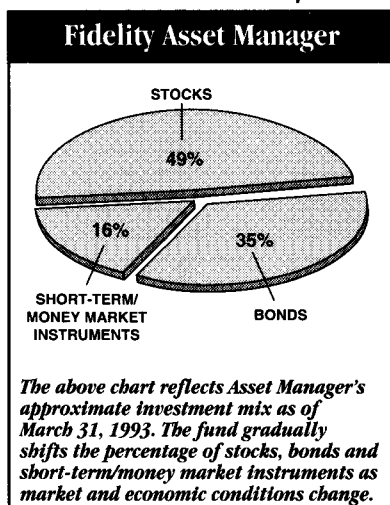
—Gregg Easterbrook

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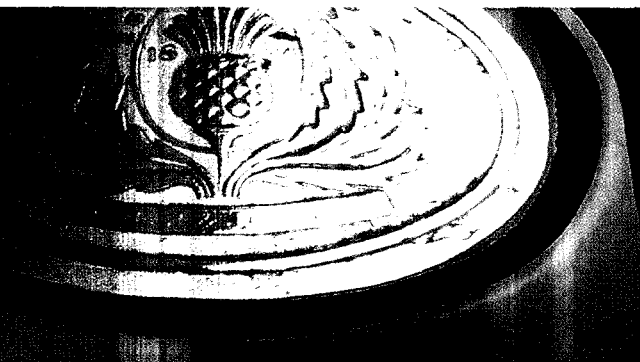
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not “It’s the economy, stupid”

Bill Clinton was elected on an untenable premise: that it is the job of the President to manage the economy. Yes, that is what we have come to expect of Presidents; but this expectation, the author argues, is punishingly at variance with anything any President can credibly deliver

BY CHARLES R. MORRIS

As all the world knows, “the economy” was the overriding issue in the 1992 presidential election. President George Bush “mishandled” the economy. He lost. Bill Clinton promised to handle it more skillfully. He won. I will argue that he won on a false issue, and that the main criterion on which our presidential elections have come to be decided—managing the economy—is a sham.

The assumption that the President manages the economy is the core of prevailing political wisdom, dinned into the public mind by a generation of pundits, a convention of discourse endlessly repeated but rarely examined. The fact is, presidential elections have become referenda on the business cycle, whose fortuitous turnings are personified in the President—thus the “Bush recession” yields to the “Clinton recovery.” This is not economics, it is anthropology—an exercise in collective magic. Presidents are properly accountable for their executive and legislative performance, and there is no question that federal actions can affect the economy, sometimes profoundly. Eliminating the budget deficit in four years, for example, might create a nasty recession or a runaway boom—economists, as always, disagree. But the effects would almost certainly be substantial, however unpredictable. Modern political campaigns, however, are fought on the premise that Presidents can *manage* the economy, that they can take detailed actions that have a precise result—such as raising productivity, reducing unemployment, or increasing investment. In that sense, how much control do Presidents really have over the economy? The answer is, Very, very little.





Mind Over Matter

THE "ECONOMY" ITSELF IS REALLY JUST A METAPHOR for the enormously complex stew of daily personal and commercial transactions among some 250 million Americans. The deceptively precise numbers that purport to measure "savings" or "growth" or "income" are crude approximations compounded from a slag heap of samples, surveys, estimates, interpolations, seasonal adjustments, and plain guesses. It takes months, even years, for economists to sort through the numbers and figure out what really happened—if they ever do. There is still no consensus on what caused the Great Depression. The most recent returns on the U.S. economy show signs of respectable growth. But economists are arguing fiercely over whether it is too little or too much, the morning lark of a solid long-term recovery or just a dead-cat bounce. And, of course, they disagree even more fiercely on the policy prescriptions that flow from their prejudices: "Do something or things will get worse!" Or, "If you do something, things will get worse!"

Clinton's ill-fated economic-stimulus program exemplifies the confusion. Certainly it was small: at \$16 billion,

hardly more than the rounding error in the national accounts. And no one could argue with a straight face that a porridge of new playgrounds, vaccination programs, and Headstart dollars would visibly improve the economy. But while the Nobel laureate economists James Tobin and Robert Solow warned that the stimulus was too small, Wall Street worried that the President would spook the bond market. If bondholders decided that the economy was growing too fast, or the government was borrowing too much, and inflation was heading up, interest rates would rise and undercut the recovery—the last thing Clinton wanted.

At one point Secretary of Labor Robert Reich, a key designer of the Clinton economic strategy, argued that the "psychological impact" of the stimulus program was what really counted. The emphasis on changing people's *minds* about the economy sounded a little like official explanations of American policy in Vietnam—bombing just enough to discourage the enemy. The resemblance, in fact, is no accident, for both the image of the President as button-pusher in the economic engine room and the heavily psychologized tactics in Vietnam are squarely in a peculiarly American tradition of thinking about society and the economy.

Pulling Levers

PAN THE CAMERA BACK ALMOST A HUNDRED YEARS: there stands an aging Henry Adams, the historian and descendant of Presidents, agape before a giant electrical dynamo at the Great Paris Exposition of 1900, ready to fall on his knees, "bewildered and helpless, as in the fourth century, a priest of Isis before the Cross of Christ." Transported by this Damascene vision, Adams set out to construct a "dynamic theory of history," seeking the fundamental laws, like those of electricity or magnetism or the kinetic theory of gases, that govern the affairs of men.

Adams's search for a scientific history was tempered by self-mocking irony. But to minds less steeped in the past, America's leap into the Machine Age and the mighty transformations of American social and industrial relations opened entirely new intellectual vistas. The new "scientific" outlook was thoroughly positivist (nothing existed, or at least was worth talking about, if it could not be measured); it was atomistic (all things were condensed from identical particles); and it was statistical (the intricate but predictable dance of countless freely colliding molecules of gas was choreographed by a few simple, immutable laws). In a series of easy stages the same logic was applied to virtually the entire field of human endeavor.

To begin with, the mapping from a mechanistic physics to the burgeoning science of economics seemed entirely natural, precise, and complete: correct prices, for instance, arose from the statistical interaction of countless atomized market participants obeying the simple canons of rational self-interest. Around the turn of the century American universities developed a defense of American liberal capitalism as the regime most consistent with a scientific outlook, and the economist's style of thinking rapidly colonized the rest of the social sciences. Franklin Giddings, at Columbia; Edward A. Ross, at the University of Wisconsin; and Charles Horton Cooley, at the University of Michigan, pushed the still-nascent study of sociology toward statistics and measurement. (Ross and Cooley started their careers as economists.) The program of the American Sociological Society, organized in 1905, was entirely "scientific," seeking the basic forces, or "sympathy," that bound society together, trying to discover a praxis of "social control" for a liberal society, teasing out the rules of the "social equilibrating-apparatus." By the 1920s all of political science was being recast into a study of the market behavior of utility-maximizing individuals. The same behaviorist faith inspired John Dewey's confidence that schools could be organized like

"great factories," to turn out self-reliant citizens who would people Dewey's vision of a liberal democracy.

After a period of eclipse during the Depression, the scientific pretensions of American economics and its sister social studies were powerfully reinforced by the sweeping triumph of Keynesianism. Ignoring Keynes's own warnings about the waywardness of real markets, American academics forged a rigidly mechanistic vision of the economic apparatus: pull this lever and investment rises, turn this flywheel and consumption goes up—all the pieces clicking smoothly into place like stainless-steel tumblers. Faith in a *deus in machina* prompted John Kennedy's wildly unprescient declaration in 1962 that there were no ideological issues left to solve; the country faced only "technical problems . . . administrative problems."

Factory whistle-stops notwithstanding, Presidents can't do much to create new jobs for machinists in Topeka.

Rather than admit that, Presidents and press exchange cant.



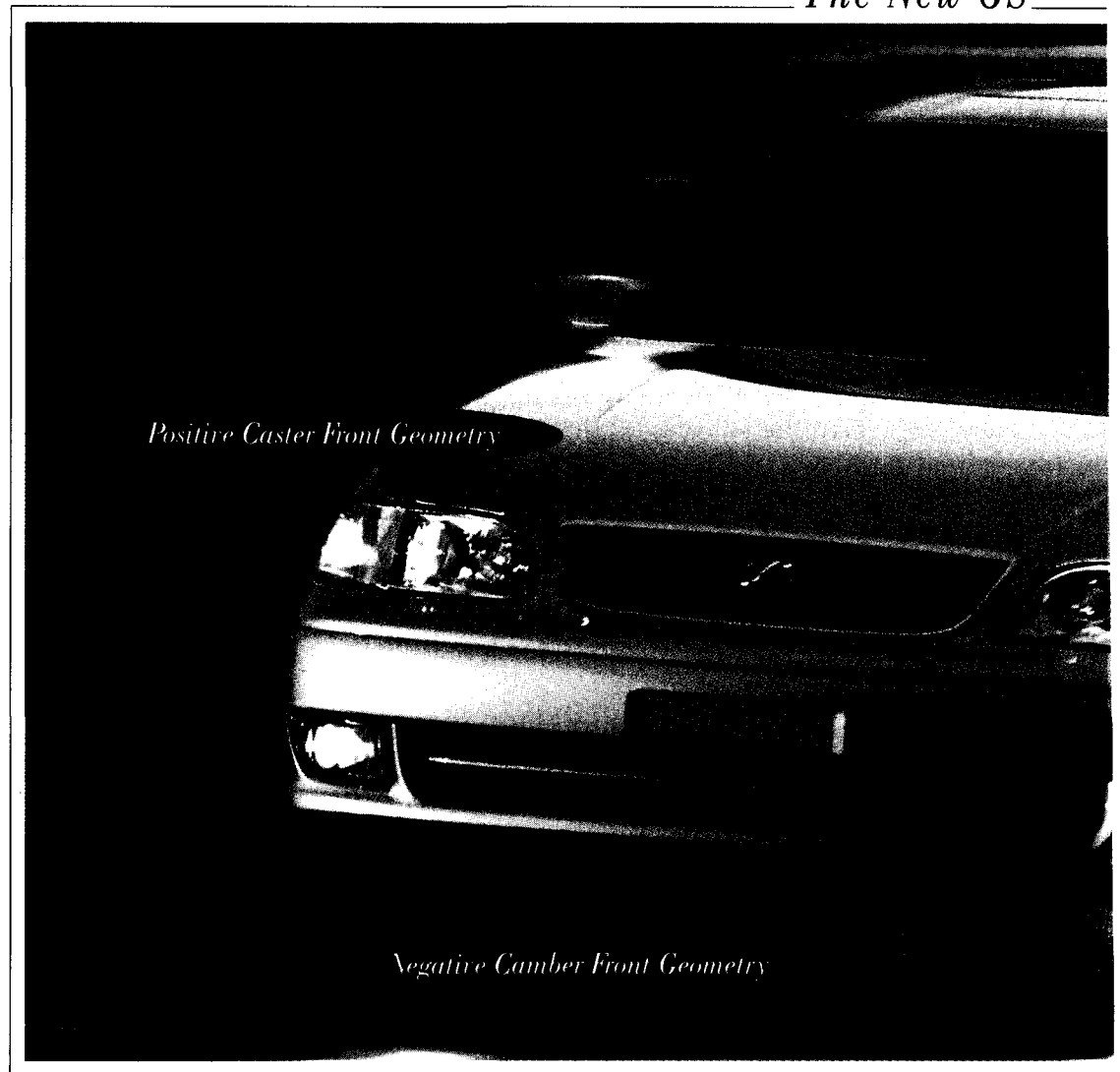
The economist's vision of the rational actor was formalized in John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern's *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior* (1944). Game

theory supplied a metaphysics for the arms race, and led Robert McNamara in his will-o'-the-wisp pursuit of a precise equilibrium of "mutual assured destruction" with the Soviets, as if nuclear arms were a problem of tariffs and quotas, like trade. Since rational actors in rational games reach mutually beneficial accommodations through signaling, it was forever a puzzle to the civilian theorists in the Pentagon that Ho Chi Minh obdurately persisted in misinterpreting their carefully calibrated bombing campaigns.

Even American ethics has become hardly more than a branch of economics. Dewey always struggled, if not very successfully, against the economist's equation of values with mere *wants*, although it seemed an obvious implication of his pragmatist teachings. There is no such struggle in John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*, the most discussed ethical work of the past generation. Rawls proceeds by constructing a system of goods-maximizing choices by highly rational atomized individuals who lack any history or social ties. The same economic bias also explains much of the American obsession with personal rights and legalistic procedure: if all wants are theoretically equal, there is nothing left for moralists to do but tinker with process. Economists, after all, care only that the corn auction works; whatever price emerges will *ipso facto* be the right one.

The interventionist bias of the early Keynesians has created a leftish aura around the more "scientific" social theories. But the same empiricist, atomistic view of society, the insistence on equating choices with values, is a major theme of American conservatism, from Milton Friedman's willingness to legalize drugs to the current

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“school choice” movement. Thomas Sowell and Robert Nozick take issue with Rawls using exactly the same microeconomic tools that Rawls uses—they just wind up with diametrically different results. The philosophic differences between the left and the right in America, that is, most often reduce to a barren instrumentalism: Should government pull the levers, or do the levers move themselves?

The reach and power of the economic paradigm in America is impressive enough; but what makes it all the more remarkable is that there is almost no compelling reason to believe that it works any better in economics than it did in guerrilla warfare, let alone in sociology, politics, or morals.

Economics in the Real World

FINANCIAL-MARKET PROFESSIONALS OFTEN TAKE for granted the practical uselessness of economists. Recently, for example, Robert Beckwitt, a bond manager at Fidelity Investments, the big mutual-funds company, tracked the success of Wall Street’s economists in forecasting interest rates. Bond values depend critically on interest rates, and bond traders basically make bets on whether interest rates will rise or fall when they buy and sell bonds. One of a Wall Street economist’s most important tasks, therefore, is to forecast rate trends, and many hours of analytic energy and vast amounts of computer power are lavished on the problem. According to Beckwitt’s data, however, the best bond-investment strategy over the past decade would have been to do exactly the opposite of what the consensus recommended: when the economists said “Sell,” the wise investor bought—and achieved, in fact, quite outstanding returns. Charles Wolf, at the Rand Corporation, once compiled a box score for the major economic forecasters; the fit between most forecasts and actual outcomes was approximately random. A running joke at *The Wall Street Journal* is a regular feature that pits top stock pickers against a portfolio compiled by throwing darts at a wall: year after year the dart board is neck and neck with the analysts.

Forecasting in economics is not the same as plotting the path of a planet. Fundamental axioms in economics have a disturbing tendency to flip upside down with little warning, as if gravity suddenly made objects float. For many years it was received wisdom in economics textbooks that if the Federal Reserve increased the money supply (by loosening the credit reins), interest rates would fall. In theory, money is a commodity like any other, and if there is more of it, its price, or the rate of interest, should fall. For years, in the main, the theory held true. Then, at some elusive moment in the 1970s, investors decided that loose credit caused inflation, which was also arguably true. The Ford and Carter Administrations had greatly expanded credit to help cushion the 1970s oil-

price shocks, and inflation was rising rapidly. If lenders expect inflation, they will insist on higher interest rates to protect the value of their money. Almost overnight the financial headlines executed an about-face: if the Federal Reserve loosened credit, it was thenceforth taken for granted that interest rates would rise, not fall. The earth, having been round, was now flat, and the economic astrolabes were adjusted accordingly.

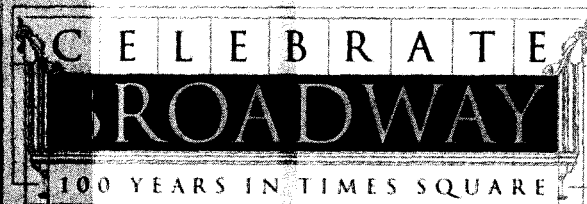
Alan Greenspan, the chairman of the Federal Reserve, was recently lectured by a Senate committee for not pushing interest rates down faster to spur an economic expansion. (Lower interest rates presumably induce greater borrowing and therefore greater economic activity.) In fact Greenspan had been pushing interest rates down very aggressively for more than a year. But the Federal Reserve controls only short-term rates, primarily through its overnight lending to member banks. So while short-term rates fell very rapidly during 1992, longer-term rates—the ones investors mainly care about—hardly budged. Investors didn’t know which law applied. Would Greenspan’s aggressive loosening make money plentiful and lower rates? Or would it trigger inflation and raise rates? The result was a kind of paralysis: short-term rates went down and long-term rates stayed up. The beneficiaries were the banks, who could suddenly borrow very cheaply from the government and lend the money right back at much higher interest, by buying longer-term government bonds. The whole point of the exercise, of course, had been to increase bank lending to business; but since banks could make so much money playing the Treasury market, lending to business actually dropped.

There is no escaping the pervasive influence of the federal behemoth. About one out of every four dollars spent in the land is spent by, or put in the pocket of the spender by, the federal government. If the government lurches left or yaws right, a big chunk of the economy lurches or yaws with it. But it is hardly a surgical policy instrument; there are few obvious levers to pull. At bottom the government engages in four kinds of economic activity. Half a trillion dollars or so is passed out to citizens each year, either directly, as in Social Security payments, or in the form of medical services. Some \$300 billion finances the global sprawl of the U.S. military. Another \$300 billion pays for the three-million-strong army of federal civil servants and a ragout of federal programs, from Headstart (\$2.7 billion) to dusty relics like the Rural Electrification Administration (\$1.2 billion). Finally, the government borrows some \$300 billion each year from banks, insurance companies, and pension funds and then cycles most of it back as interest on the debt—a majestically rotating wheel of money.

Any economic actor as big as the federal government can, like John Steinbeck’s Lennie, clearly do some Very Important Bad Things, whether it intends to or not. In 1982, for example, Congress and the Reagan Administration chickened out on a \$10 billion savings-and-loan crisis.

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Instead of paying the tab and closing down the industry, they covered it up with phony accounting and looser rules, and turned it into a \$150 billion problem just a few years later—managing along the way to create a vast supply of unusable commercial real estate, and to roil all the world's financial markets by unleashing a great flood of federal borrowing for the sake of unlucky depositors. By the same token, a complicated but very different series of policy decisions in Japan during the 1980s has created an almost identical American-scale S&L-style crisis there. Once in a while, on the other hand, an opportunity arises to do a Very Important Good Thing. Actually fixing the U.S. health-care system, so that costs were brought under control, the uninsured received minimal benefits, and workers could change jobs without fear of losing coverage (if all that is indeed possible), would be just such an Important Good Thing.

But for the most part the federal apparatus trundles irresistibly ahead, a vast, splay-footed creature moving pretty much under its own power. A web of laws, regulations, long-term procurement contracts, treaties, jealously guarded congressional prerogatives, and deference to hallowed practice collectively overbear the occasional deflecting obstacle. Gentle nudges, pluckings at the coat sleeves, are of no avail against such tremendous inertial force; a minor initiative like the Clinton stimulus program is simply lost underfoot. Only very occasionally an utterly determined and utterly resourceful President, as Richard Nixon was, can bend the machinery to his will. Fearing for his re-election in 1972, with the economy slowing and inflation rising, Nixon and his Treasury Secretary, John Connally, engaged in a bravura performance of economic browbeating. They slapped on wage and price controls, broke the link between the dollar and gold, gunned up the money supply, and managed to wring out a year of strong growth with low inflation just before the election—at the price of triggering a huge recession during Nixon's short-lived second term. The economy, that is, *can* be managed over the short term, but only by relentless and violent clubbing, not by pushing buttons, and not by Presidents who are queasy about their methods or care about the consequences.

Truly important economic decisions, as often as not, zip by unnoticed by the public, probably by the President, because their consequences can take such a long time to become clear. For example, housing prices rose strongly through most of the 1980s, partly in response to severe supply problems in the early part of the decade. The housing shortage is usually attributed to the Baby Boomers' entering adulthood. The population entering

retirement, however, was almost as big, and their housing behavior was something new in history. In 1973 Nixon and the Democratic Congress had sharply increased Social Security payments and indexed them to rise faster than inflation. For the first time, a retiring population had the wherewithal to keep their homes, and by and large they did so, instead of moving in with their children as previous generations had done. A substantial share of the nation's housing stock was thus withdrawn from the normal inventory-refreshment cycle, precipitating a boom in housing construction a decade later.

The new independence of the elderly, in fact, has had a long list of profound consequences: the growth of retirement villages, the boom in states like Florida and Arizona, new nursing-care patterns for the failing aged (the proverbial youngest daughter now typically lives in another city), and much more.

Many of these changes, of course, represent progress. The point is merely that putting a greater share of national income in the hands of oldsters has had powerful effects far beyond the simple shifting of relative poverty indices among age cohorts.

Such examples are numerous. The country's economic structure has been profoundly affected by three decades of federal, state, and insurance-company policies aimed at expanding third-party coverage of health services. Last year the number of U.S. hospital workers increased by about as many people as are employed by all American computer makers. The Pentagon's aggressive search for miniaturized weapons technologies in the 1950s and early 1960s funded a host of unconventional electronics geniuses, helped create California's Silicon Valley and, by extension, the American venture-capital industry, and is still the source of much of the U.S. edge in advanced computer technologies. Economic models, by and large, just skate by issues like these. They're messy and unpredictable, and they involve tremendous effects from seemingly small actions—wars won or lost because of a missing horseshoe. And they are, depressingly enough for the traditional "scientific" economists, the way the real world works.

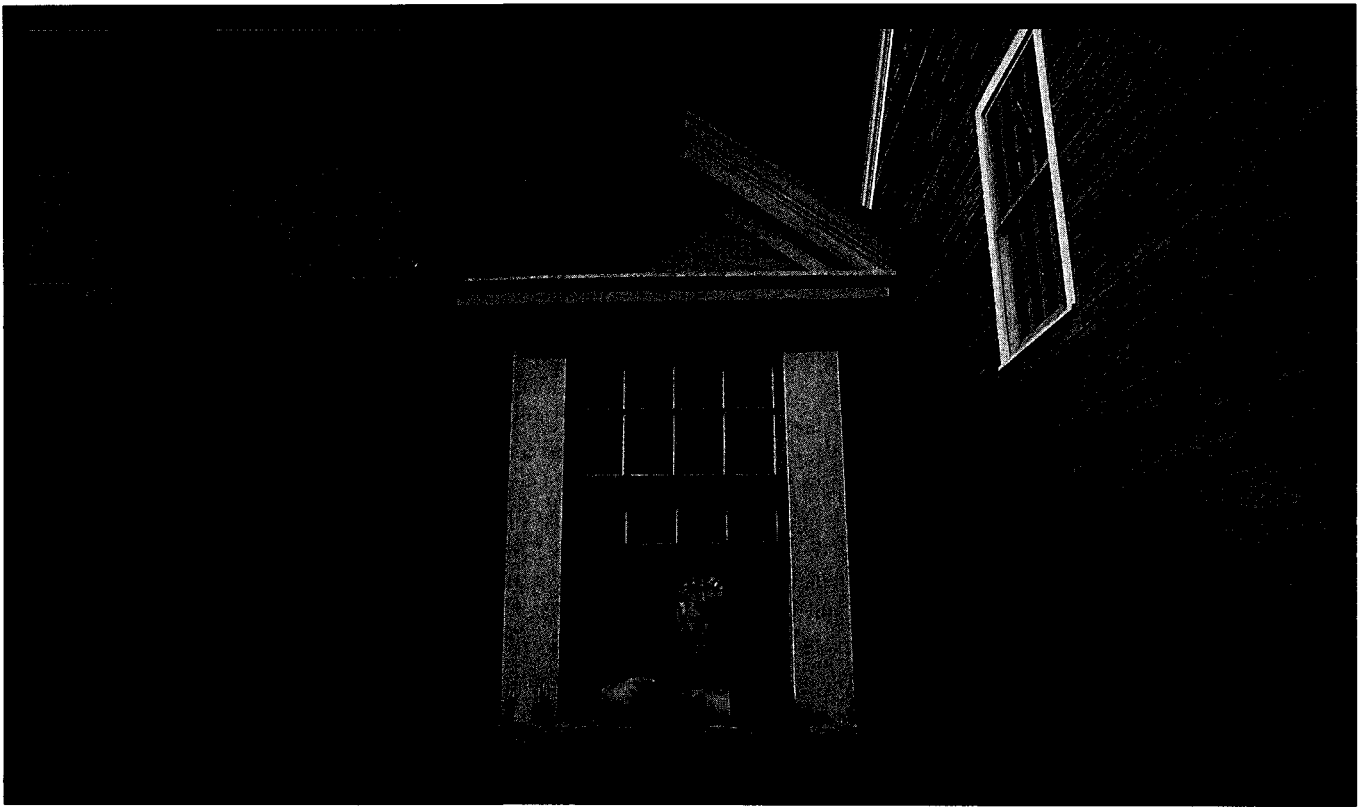
Complexity

THE BEAUTY OF MACHINES LIES IN REGULARITY and order—the predictable harmonies of the Newtonian solar system, the eternal canons of a clockmaker God. Specify the initial conditions of any system—say, a table of billiard balls. Introduce a force—the moving cue ball—into the system and calculate the angles and forces of the subsequent colli-

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sions, and you will have specified the future position of the balls. That is the fundamental premise of the modern study of economics. But billiard balls don't work like that.

The celestial machine of Newtonian physics is a simple system, a small number of bodies revolving around a single massive body. But systems with many interacting elements, "complex" systems, do not behave like simple systems. You may specify the initial position of the billiard balls to any arbitrary level of precision—the sphericity of the balls, the smoothness of the surface, the trueness of the bumpers. But there will be some level of imprecision remaining, some element of the unknown, some fleeting shadow of randomness. If you strike successive "identical" tables of balls identically, their final positions will vary widely after only a very small number of collisions. Very tiny degrees of randomness, fed through a very small number of collisions, will lead to radically varying outcomes. If God removed an electron from the end of the universe, it would change the collision pattern of the air molecules in my room. A few days later there might be a storm in a neighboring state.

The real world is messily complex. Water flows in turbulent patterns; tiny variations in the flow quickly build up to big structures—eddies, riptides, vortices—that merge, expand, disappear. Molecules in a cell accrete tiny electrical variations and patterns of connections with other molecules. Suddenly a threshold is crossed and huge events are triggered—the cell divides, or pours forth viruses, or becomes cancerous, or dies. Mutations build up invisibly in the fossil record, and suddenly there is an enormous florescence of new species and life forms; the face of the earth changes. Real financial transactions are rarely structured like the rational two-person game so beloved of economic theorists: add just one more player and create a modest range of choices, and the computer simulations spin out a rich new world of shifting combinations and coalitions. Chess is a game between only two players, with only moderately complex rules, but it quickly spirals into an infinity of outcomes. Scientists are just now developing the supercomputers and the mathematical tools needed for problems like these. Even planetary orbits, it turns out, are much less stable and predictable than was once assumed.

Is the economy a complex system? Put even more radically, is the economy "computable"? That is, is it hopeless even to *try* to model it? The center of thinking about such issues is a small think tank in the foothills of the Rockies—the Santa Fe Institute, devoted to exploring the new understanding of complexity. Since the mid-1980s it has facilitated a remarkable dialogue between

scholars such as the Nobel Prize-winning scientists Murray Gell-Man and Philip Anderson and the economist Kenneth Arrow, a Nobel laureate and perhaps the country's finest mathematical economist. W. Brian Arthur, a professor of economics at Stanford, and John Holland, of the University of Michigan, who was trained as a computer scientist, both Santa Fe fellows, are intensely involved in re-evaluating conventional economics in the light of complexity theory.

Both Holland and Arthur are interested in the local microformations in the economy, the vortices in the turbulent stream. Arthur points to the "QWERTY" typewriter keyboard, originally designed to slow typists down so that mechanical keys wouldn't jam. There are many more-efficient configurations, but QWERTY is now the unassailable standard, just as the

Netherlands, a northern country with a short growing season, is the world's tulip center. Any economic system, that is, may have a very large number of possible equilibrium points, which flies in the face of traditional theory. Worse, raw chance may play a major role in the final equilibrium. "Economic data," Arthur says, "give an illusion of a stable, long-term trend line, but underneath that apparent stability is a constant turnover of structures. Some regions become rich, some stay poor, and often there's no obvious reason why. We need to understand those processes, how they work in the real world, from the ground up." (The idea of looking at smaller structures has immediate relevance. Recent national economic reports have been significantly influenced by recessionary conditions in a few states, such as New York and California. Politically distributed national stimulus programs are, at the very least, an inefficient response.)

Holland points out that the economy is an adaptive system, which increases its unpredictability. Unlike the molecules in a gas, economic agents learn from experience. There is indeed a kind of Heisenberg principle of economic management. If the federal government starts focusing on, say, the money supply as a tool for controlling the economy, the relationship between the money supply and the rest of the economy will surely change, vitiating the original policy assumptions. Biological systems, Holland suggests, are better than Newtonian mechanics as analogues for an economy. "The amount of biomass and its complexity seem to have been increasing at a steady, slow rate, for an extremely long period of time, although there is enormous variation in the successful life forms in any particular period. Economies may work that way. But there may also be some stable solutions; fish, porpoises, and ichthyosaurs at different times

The numbers that purport to measure "savings" or "growth" or "income" are crude approximations. It takes months, even years, to figure out what really happened.



developed the same solution—hydrodynamic bodies.” Arthur cautions, however, that there are nine or ten solutions to the problem of evolving an eye—pinholes, lens arrays, and the like—and that decidedly *un*hydrodynamic mollusks and crabs have been very successful colonizers of the seas.

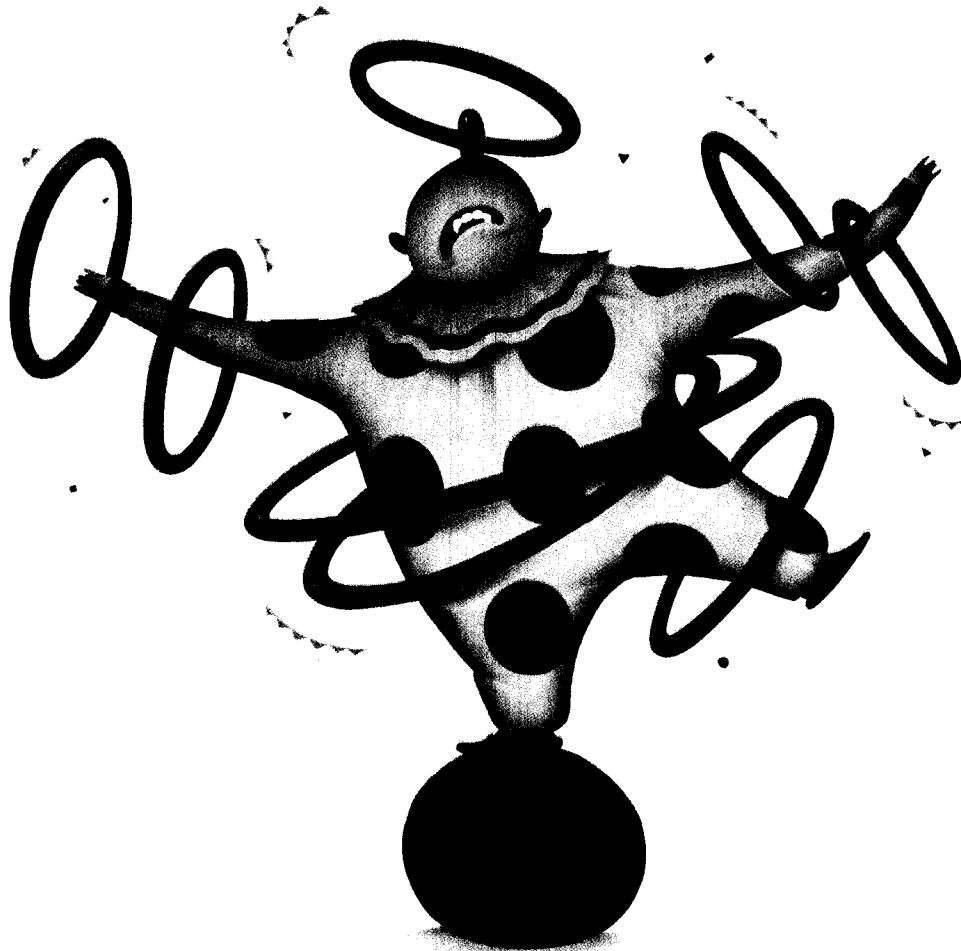
The notion that economies are complex systems—more biological than Newtonian—has powerful intuitive appeal. But it will be a long time before complexity theory will be of much help to policy makers. One frustrating problem is a lack of data. Physicists are used to working with thousands, even tens of thousands, of observations. Industrialized countries have been collecting reasonably consistent economic statistics for only about fifty years; their quality is often poor, and their content changes subtly over the years. Financial-market data are somewhat better, and there is some tantalizing but inconclusive evidence that market behavior may mirror that of complex natural systems. Drop grains of sand, one after another, on the same spot; they will form a pile with a regular shape. Every so often a single grain will start an avalanche; most of the avalanches will be small, but once in a while, and quite unpredictably, one will be catastrophically large, wiping out whole sections of the pile. The market movements of most interest to Wall Street may be just avalanches in a sand pile. For the moment, however, the val-

ue of complexity theory in economics and finance is primarily as a cautionary metaphor, a pinprick to the pretensions of pundits, a warning that, at least occasionally, well-intended policies could, as the physicist David Ruelle put it, lead to “wild . . . fluctuations” with “possibly quite disastrous effects.”

Economic Discourses

THERE IS NO ESCAPING ECONOMIC POLICY. THE federal government is too large a presence in the American living room to be ignored, too insistent a claimant when the pie is divided. A President who feigned not having an economic policy would be engaging in as empty, and as damaging, a pretense as the most enthusiastic economic micromanager. The element of unpredictability in economic systems counsels caution, not nihilism, humility rather than despair.

The problem is one of domains of discourse. At least since John Kennedy’s 1960 campaign to get “America moving again,” Presidents have been obliged to adopt the pose of day-to-day managers. Day-to-day responsibilities imply day-to-day results; the press demands them, and the voters are trained to expect them. But let’s face it, all the factory whistle-stops in a campaign notwith-



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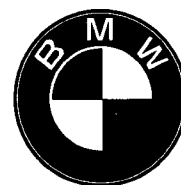
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standing, Presidents can't do much to create new jobs for machinists in Topeka. Rather than admit that, Presidents and press exchange cant, and voters sink into cynicism.

Discourse needs to shift toward "stewardship" and away from "management." We are a grown-up nation, with an educated, sophisticated press corps. It should be possible, although it will certainly not be easy, to set reasonable goals for political stewardship of the economy, and develop some reasonable scorecard on the important issues. Guidelines for sound stewardship might include, for instance, a list like the following.

Skepticism about one's own cleverness is usually a good policy starting point. In America, at least, markets mostly work, after their fashion. That is, although they almost never produce optimum results, and often take an uncomfortably long time to work, market outcomes are usually more nuanced, more subtly adapted to underlying complexities, than a priori designs. When Presidents Carter and Reagan decontrolled oil prices at the outset of the 1980s, supply, demand, and prices all came into a fair degree of balance with surprising speed after almost a decade of administrative floundering. Therefore a good initial bias is perpetually raised eyebrows toward complicated nonmarket solutions.

Pandering produces bad policy. There is an emerging consensus, even among quite conservative economists, that only the federal government can solve the health-care conundrum; indeed, it may be the Administration's single most important economic issue, affecting business and consumers alike. Solving the problem will be enormously difficult, requiring some measure of pain all around. The temptation to opt for politically expedient solutions with severely damaging long-term consequences may be overwhelming. The democratic principle presumes that the public will listen to arguments, consistently and persistently delivered, in favor of doing the right thing. Perhaps it is just a long time since an Administration has tried.

All important policies are long-term. The quandary facing elected officials is that anything important takes more than four years. Even successful health-care reform would not pay visible dividends sooner than the end of the decade. The benefits from careful deficit reduction will never be quantified. Even an Administration resolved to do the right thing over the long term, as the Clinton Administration seems to be, will be cruelly torn between its own decent instincts and the clamor of political advisers for short-term results.

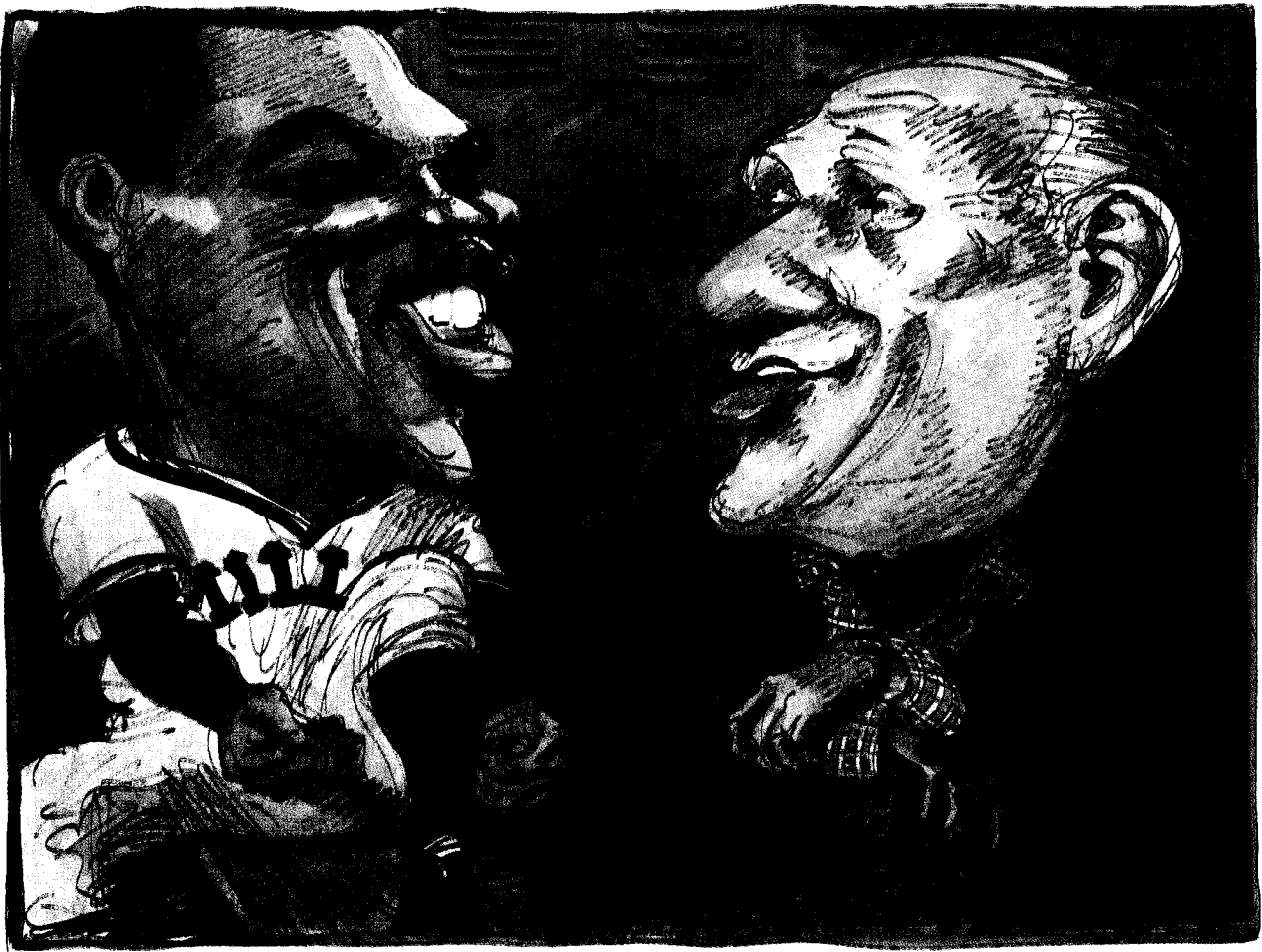
And finally, *Presidents should trust their instincts over models.* Arguments against deficit spending are almost always cast in instrumentalist terms—its effects on interest rates, inflation, and investment. The truth is that none of these

effects can be consistently demonstrated. Deficits, for example, have been rising steadily for ten years, and interest rates and inflation have been falling just as steadily: ten-year and thirty-year bonds have recently been at two-decade lows. A recent Goldman Sachs study found no relation between deficits and interest rates in most industrial countries, and only a weak, and fading, relation in England and America. There is no question that large deficits have economic consequences; it's just hard to prove what they are. It's an example of the complexity problem. The background noise—the effects of recessions, technology cycles, global capital flows, savings rates, monetary policy, commodity shortages, political disruptions—overwhelms our ability to trace the consequences of change in a single variable.

The clashes of economists on the meaning of deficits, unfortunately, obscure the truly important, if "unscientific," reason why they should be eliminated. Deficits are moral hazards. They are fundamentally antidemocratic; they allow government to increase spending without the implicit referendum of a tax increase. It has long been a settled principle of Western civil government that state borrowing leads to profligacy and irresponsibility. If revenues cannot constrain spending, government itself will be unrestrained. We need to eliminate deficit spending not because someone's computer says it will create more investment in 1996, or whenever, but to restore the integrity of our political system.

To President Clinton's great credit, his first economic speeches, stripped of the patina of economic jargon, really do seem to have been appeals to citizens to do the right thing—to endure some pain in order to bring the appetites of government back into line with its resources, to forgo some personal benefits for a greater good. And judging from the first polls, people have reacted very positively, just as one might hope. But by so baldly appealing to principle, Clinton has assumed a heavy burden of faith-keeping. If taxes go up and the deficit does *not* go down, it will be a breach of trust not likely to be forgiven or forgotten, and the backwash of voter cynicism could poison the political system for years. Unfortunately, as the specifics of the Clinton program become clearer, the danger of precisely such a result seems very real.

The public and its elected politicians need to reinforce each others' best instincts, not their worst ones. Presidents will perform up to the standard the public sets for them. Dropping our insistence that our Presidents spout cant and pretend to be daily miracle workers, shifting the focus to the long term, and helping to search out the right principles of action are the least we owe our Presidents, and ourselves. □



FIRST ENCOUNTERS

WILLIE MAYS AND LEO DUROCHER

IT IS A SPRING MORNING in Sanford, Florida, 1951. Leo Durocher—once a shortstop with the brawling St. Louis Cardinals Gas House Gang, now manager of the New York Giants—has driven over to have a look at a hot prospect named Willie Mays. It is only four years since Jackie Robinson broke the color bar in the major leagues, and at nineteen Mays has advanced from the Birmingham Black Barons of his native Alabama through the B League to Triple A ball. This Minneapolis Millers' exhibition game has been arranged just so Durocher can see Mays play. "I've got quite a report on you from Trenton, kid," Leo says. Willie: "What did the report say?" Leo: "It said that your hat keeps flying off."

Mays does run fast. This morning he puts on quite a show—a double his first time up, some stunning catches, a stolen base, a home run that clears not only the left-field fence but the clubhouse and railroad tracks, too. When Durocher leaves in the seventh inning, Mays is crushed. What more can a manager want?

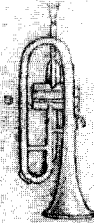
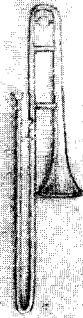
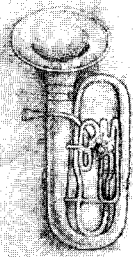
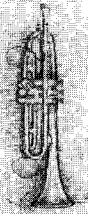
By late spring, with the Giants losing steadily, Mays is looking even more impressive. One day the Millers' manager gets a telephone call—Durocher wants Mays right away. Mays panics. "Call him back," he begs. "Tell him I don't want to go to New York. I'm not ready." "Talk to Leo yourself," the manager says. Willie (in his high, piping voice): "I'm not coming." Leo (growling): "What the hell do you mean you're not coming?" Mays admits he's scared. Suppose he can't hit big-league pitching? Leo: "What are you hitting now?" Willie: "Four seventy-seven." Leo: "Well, do you think you can hit two-fucking-fifty for me?" Mays guesses he can.

That's how it began. Durocher was a pugnacious guy, but he saw that this rookie needed bolstering, so he praised him—"rubbed him," he said. It wasn't hard, because he also loved him. Mays hit homers, stole bases, and chased balls all over center field, and in what became a fabled race, the Giants surged from far behind to seize the pennant.

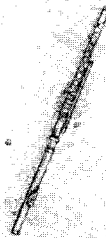
—Nancy Caldwell Sorel

EVENING AT POPS

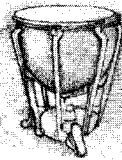
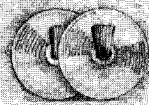
Beginning July 9, be sure to tune in for WGBH's "Evening At Pops" as the Boston Pops Orchestra celebrates its 108th season by bringing top stars into your home every week. Joining John Williams and the Pops this summer will be Aretha Franklin, Jessye Norman, Linda Ronstadt, and other fine performers. There will also be outstanding broadcasts from previous years, including Tony Bennett and John and Bonnie Raitt. Digital Equipment Corporation is proud to sponsor this remarkable series in association with WGBH Boston and the Boston Pops Orchestra. And this year's line-up will no doubt make the summer special for the entire family.



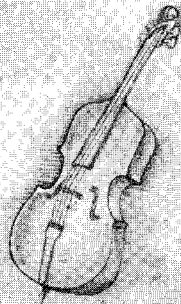
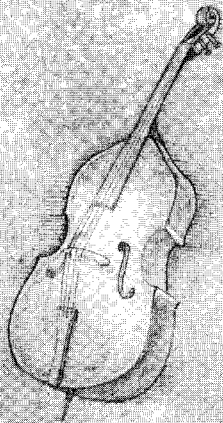
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The country was founded on national myths that are now palpably eroding, leaving its people to contemplate their shrunken economic prospects with a chill lucidity

THE DISENCHANTMENT OF IRELAND

BY GEOFFREY WHEATCROFT

NO ONE EVER MINDS HAVING TO VISIT DUBLIN. Apart from the warmth of the welcome from friends, there is the look and the tang of the city itself. Dublin has changed a good deal in the quarter century I have known it, for better and for worse. It is much more prosperous, which is to say much less poverty-stricken. Not very long ago film companies would shoot spy movies here, because it was the only city in Western Europe that looked as shabby and decrepit as East Berlin. Now the old slums of north Dublin have been cleared, even though it meant pulling down some fine streets and squares. That was only part of what redevelopment wrought in the 1970s. The destruction of a long Georgian terrace on Lower Fitzwilliam Street to make way for the vile Electricity Board offices is hard to forgive, and I particularly resent the demolition of the old Royal Hibernian Hotel, on Dawson Street, where there used to be good "crack" (seeing friends and enjoying what might decorously be called the conviviality of Irish life). For all that, the essence remains. Dublin's fair city is still fair enough. The streets where once a terrible beauty was born keep a beauty of their own, and any excuse to come here and walk through the streets and squares stippled with sunlight is welcome.

Recent political events had brought me to Dublin. In one sense, nothing ever seems to change. The peculiar conditions of Irish politics, and the elaborate system of proportional representation (for which the Irish Republic—like Israel in a quite different way—is a poor advertisement), mean that a turnover at general elections is remarkably difficult to achieve. And so for most of its existence the independent Irish state has had something close to one-party rule. The two large parties need a little explaining. They bear no relation to the left-right divide in most European countries. Instead, they originate in the civil war of 1922–1923, in some ways a more formative and traumatic event for Ireland than the war with the British forces which preceded it.

At the end of 1921 delegates from the original Sinn Féin ("We Alone") party, which had organized the "war of independence" from 1919 to 1921, signed a treaty with the British government, but then Sinn Féin split over whether to accept the treaty. The treaty included Parti-

tion, carving the six counties of Northern Ireland into a new province. But although it is sometimes stated that Partition was the issue over which the split came, this is not so. For the time being, Partition was tacitly accepted, and the point at issue was the constitutional status of twenty-six-county southern Ireland. Was it to be a semi-dependent territory, which was all that the Home Rulers had asked for in Charles Parnell's time, or—as it turned out—a Free State with the status of a dominion which was more or less autonomous but still had an oath of allegiance to the English Crown? That was the breaking point, over which the Republican minority within Sinn Féin broke away to fight the civil war against the party's Free Staters. They lost the war but won the peace. Today's Fine Gael ("Band of Gaels") opposition party is descended from the Free Staters of 1922; on the other side, the Republicans regrouped after the civil war, became a constitutional party known as Fianna Fáil ("Soldiers of Destiny"), swallowed their principles about nonrecognition of the Free State, entered parliamentary politics, and came to power in 1932. That was itself a tribute to the new state: there aren't many countries where there could have been a free election with one party peacefully handing office to another less than ten years after the two had fought a savage civil war.

The man under whom Fianna Fáil took over running the country was Eamon de Valera, one of the outstanding politicians of the twentieth century, anywhere, by any standards. From 1932 to 1959 "Dev" led the country: uninterrupted for the first sixteen years and thereafter with only short breaks in 1948–1951 and 1954–1957. He retired to become President (Ireland is like Germany rather than France or the United States: the President is a formal head of state without executive power), and died in 1975 at the age of ninety-two. Even after his time his achievement lived on. Fianna Fáil was in office from 1957 to 1973, from 1977 to 1981, and briefly during 1982. It came back in 1987, and is in power still. This is an achievement unmatched by any party in any democratic European country in this century: Fianna Fáil's only rival is Mexico's delightfully named Institutional Revolutionary Party.

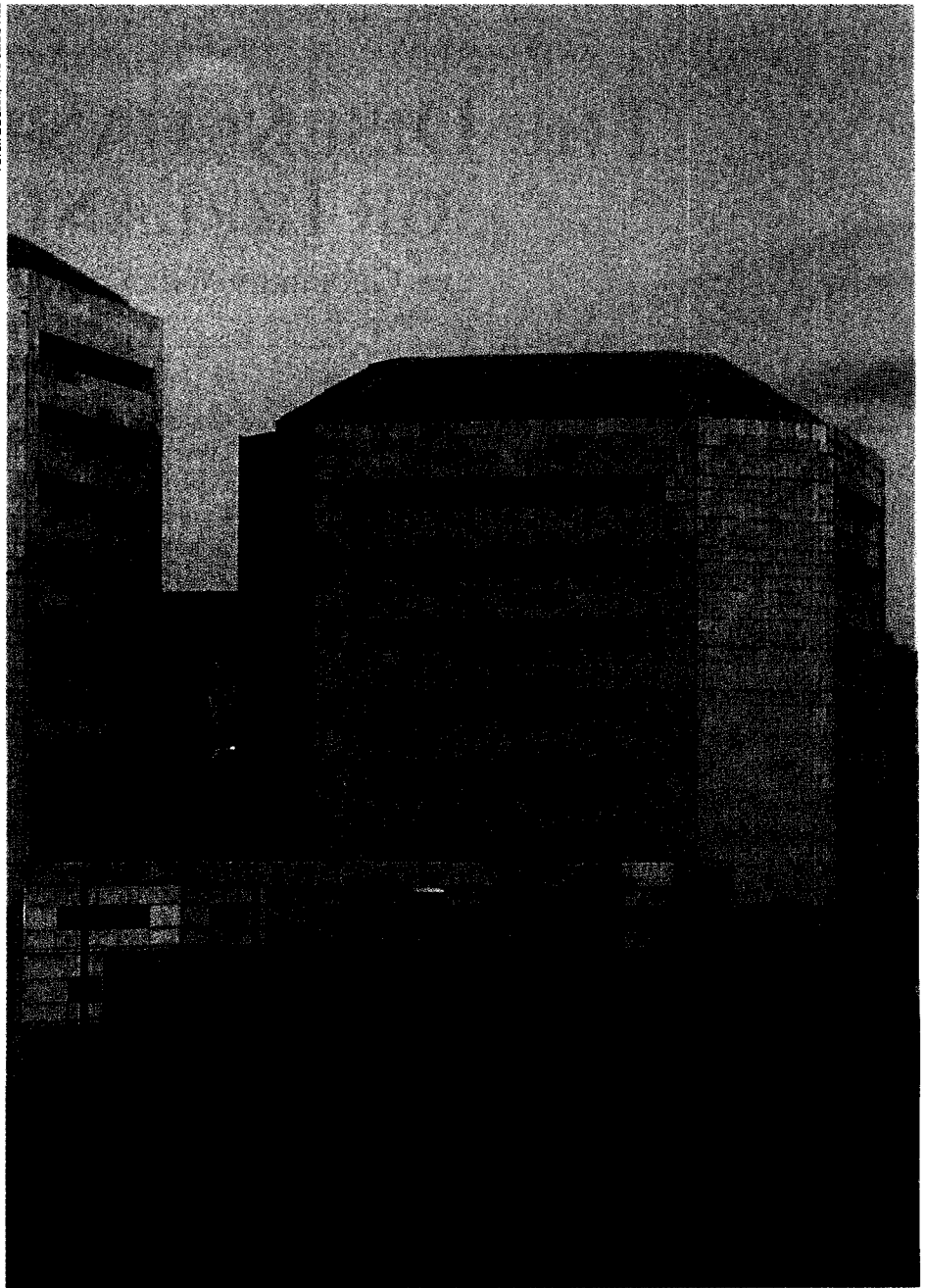
The party now seems almost impossible to budge. To

most of us who reported on last November's election, it seemed that the Irish people wanted a change, just as American voters did that month. They expressed their discontent with Fianna Fáil by switching in large numbers to Labour, the third party, which dramatically increased its vote and more than doubled its number of seats in the Dáil, or parliament. But what happened? Tired of Fianna Fáil, the voters got another Fianna Fáil government, this time in a coalition—not a corrupt bargain, exactly, but a cynical one—with Labour. Obliquely commenting on this deal, the once and future Prime Minister Albert Reynolds said it heralded the end of “civil war politics,” and never mind that the party he leads is itself a product of that civil war.

Maybe he is right, and the inheritance of a quarrel that most Irish people have forgotten will fade away. But that fading away is taking its time. De Valera's shadow still falls across Ireland (a Fianna Fáil campaign song last November mentioned him in the first line), and in many ways it remains much the country he made—or tried to make. Reynolds may not realize it, but when he speaks of the end of civil-war politics, he is not only speaking of the death of the tradition he himself was reared in; he is unconsciously decrying De Valera's memory.

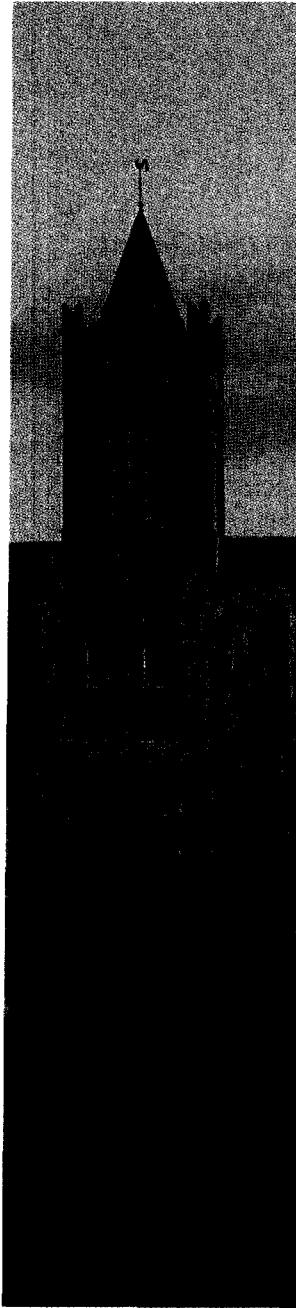
Others, too, have been celebrating the birth of a new Ireland or, as they see it, Ireland's arrival, finally, in the twentieth century. There have already been changes, significant but slow. Until very recently the moral teaching of the Roman Catholic Church was enforced in its entirety by Irish law, and to a large degree it still is. There is no divorce (to the personal inconvenience of three or four senior political figures); private, consensual homosexuality is still a crime; and a referendum on the same day as the election decided that abortion should remain outlawed under all circumstances. The country had been shocked earlier by the “Miss X” case: a young girl, pregnant after being raped, tried to go to England (as many Irishwomen do) to have the pregnancy ended, but was stopped by the Irish authorities. In the wake of that harrowing affair, two other amendments

PETER ZOLLER/THE SLIDE FILE



were put to referendum last November and passed, permitting the “right to information” and the “right to travel,” meaning a right to information about, and the freedom to cross the Irish Sea to get, an abortion—which three votes together might almost suggest a taste for having it both ways.

On the other hand, condoms are on sale here, as they weren't twenty years ago. So are many of the books that in English bookstores formerly bore the enticing label “banned in Ireland.” Censorship still exists (even a libertarian might find the fact that Madonna's *Sex* is banned in Ireland a tempting reason for coming here), but most of the old classics that were once on the censor's list are now available, *Ulysses* among them. Indeed, you can scarcely



Not very long ago
film companies
would shoot spy
movies in Dublin
because it was the
only city in Western
Europe that looked as
shabby and decrepit
as East Berlin.

GOVERNMENT OFFICES AND
CHRIST CHURCH, DUBLIN

get away from Joyce's great book, and the implications of that are interesting.

Although Ireland doesn't yet have as highly developed a "heritage industry" as England (that would be difficult), the country has found its own way of living in the past. On every street are signs of the times: other times. Some of this is done without any excess of good taste. When Oliver St. John Gogarty became the film censor for the Irish Free State, more than sixty years ago, he said that his task was to prevent the Californication of Ireland; there is now no one to stop the kitschification of Dublin. It was a little lowering a few years ago to come across a boutique called Anna Livia, and a particularly grim example of public kitsch is the statue of Sweet Molly Malone wheeling her wheelbar-

row which was put up not long ago to one side of College Green. This is admittedly a town of monuments, representing different sides of Ireland's inheritance. Although Nelson's Pillar, the memorial to the English admiral which once stood on O'Connell Street, was blown up by operatives of the Irish Republican Army in 1966, the arch commemorating the Dublin soldiers who fought for the British Army in the Boer War, informally known as Traitors' Gate, still stands at a corner of Stephen's Green. On the next corner of the green is a more recent, and contrasting, monument to the 1798 revolutionary Wolfe Tone. It consists of several erect stone slabs, and was immediately dubbed Tonehenge. (Dubliners haven't lost their talent for word-play. Another recent piece of street statuary depicts a naked girl in a fountain, and is known as the Floozie in the Jacuzzi or, alternatively, the Whore in the Shower, which rhymes in Dublinese.)

Latest of all these memorials are the Bloomsday plaques. Across the city, wherever Mr. Bloom set foot during his epic fictional peregrination on June 16, 1904, decorated metal plates have been set in the sidewalk. There is an element of chutzpah here. James Joyce may have been obsessed with his memories of Dublin, but he left Ireland in his early twenties and spent the remaining nearly forty years of his life in voluntary and disdainful exile—not to mention (as I have) that for all his life and many years after, his masterpiece was suppressed in his native country by the fiercest censorship in Western Europe. Still, no doubt the posthumous pardon is a fine thing.

The Myth of the Language

AS I WALKED AMONG THESE RELICS, THE CONTRASTING mementos of those very different contemporary Irishmen De Valera and Joyce (they were born in the same year), a phrase came to my mind. Not the terrible beauty of Yeats's line, but another kind of beauty. At much the same time that Stephen Dedalus was growing up, the Italian Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti spoke warmly of "beautiful national legends." These were the legends, he said, that helped bind together a newly united or newly independent country (which was, incidentally, why he did not want to see them undermined by critical scholarship prying in the archives). The Italians haven't, indeed, been backward at national myth-mongering. But Ireland has no match in Europe. And although such myths can be genuinely nourishing, it may be that if in the Irish case they ever were, their nutritional value is now negative. But many Irish people—certainly the many Irish politicians still in De Valera's thrall—are reluctant to examine those myths.

Take the beautiful myth of the "national language." A centenary has just passed in Ireland, quite unnoticed. Last year's general election was by coincidence held one hundred years to the day after Douglas Hyde's lecture to

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SEASON PREVIEW

North America's jazz and blues festivals

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Montréal, Québec
July 1-11

More than 350 concerts will be featured this year at the Festival Internationale de Jazz de Montréal, one of the biggest jazz festivals in the world. Last year, 1.3 million people were drawn to the 11-day event, held downtown at the Place des Arts. Free outdoor concerts will be presented on eight stages, while ticketed indoor events will be held in five of Montréal's best concert halls. Among those scheduled to appear this year are the Herbie Hancock Trio, Los Lobos, Ellis Marsalis, and John Mayall and the Bluesbreakers. The festival begins at noon each day, lasting until midnight. Admission to all outdoor events is free; tickets for the indoor shows range from \$15 to \$40 Canadian. For more information: Festival Internationale de Jazz de Montréal, 822 Sherbrooke Street East, Montréal, Québec H2L1K4; (514) 871-1881.

KANSAS CITY BLUES AND JAZZ FESTIVAL

Kansas City, Missouri
July 24 and 25

This is the third year that Kansas City has combined its annual blues and jazz festivals into one big event. More than 100,000 people are expected to attend the festival, which takes place in Penn Valley Park. At least two dozen national and local blues and jazz acts will be performing. The music runs from noon to 8:30 p.m. each day. This year's lineup includes Robert Cray, Johnnie Taylor, Hugh Masekela, Ramsey Lewis, Ronnie Laws, and



Duke Robillard. A two-day pass costs \$6. For more information and tickets: Kansas City Blues and Jazz Festival, Suite 204, 423 Westport Road, Kansas City, MO 64111; (800) 530-5266.

RIVERBLUES FESTIVAL

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
July 24 and 25

Penn's Landing, along the Delaware River, is the site for the sixth annual RiverBlues Festival, the largest blues festival on the East Coast. Continuous live music will be played on four stages from 1:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. each day, with more than 45,000 expected to attend. This year's lineup includes Al Green, Buddy Guy, Albert Collins and the Icebreakers, the Fabulous Thunderbirds, Taj Mahal, John Campbell, and the Excellos. A host of summertime picnic foods will be on sale. Tickets for each day cost \$10 in advance or \$15 at the gate, and \$1 for children under age 12. For more information and tickets: Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau, 1515 Market Street, Suite 2020, Philadelphia, PA 19102; (215) 636-1666.

MOUNT HOOD FESTIVAL OF JAZZ

Gresham, Oregon
August 13-15

Now in its 12th year, the Mount Hood Festival of Jazz always makes a point of presenting a variety of jazz styles, and this year is no different. Among the artists scheduled to appear at the event are George Benson, Sonny Rollins, and Branford Marsalis and the Tonight Show Band. The festival will kick off Friday at 7:00 p.m. at the Mount Hood Community College Stadium and continue from 1:00 p.m. to midnight on Saturday and from 1:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets cost \$25 for each day's concerts. For more information and tickets: Mount Hood Festival of Jazz Foundation, Box 2001, Gresham, OR 97030; (503) 666-3810.

JVC JAZZ FESTIVAL NEWPORT

Newport, Rhode Island
August 13-15

The country's oldest jazz festival celebrates its 39th year with a lineup that features many new and old favorites. Rosemary Cloon-

ey and the Count Basie Orchestra will kick things off with performances on Friday night on the famous grass courts of Newport Casino at the International Tennis Hall of Fame. The action then switches to Fort Adams State Park, overlooking Narragansett Bay, where Saturday's lineup will include Ray Charles, Grover Washington Jr., and Michel Camilo. Among the artists scheduled to perform on Sunday are George Benson, Nina Simone, Spyro Gyra, and the Newport All-Stars. Performances will be held from noon to 6:30 p.m. on Saturday and from noon to 6:00 p.m. on Sunday. Ticket prices range from \$25 to \$55. For more information and tickets: Newport Festivals, Box 605, Newport, RI 02840; (401) 847-3700.

BATON ROUGE BLUES FESTIVAL

Baton Rouge, Louisiana
August 28 and 29

Now in its 13th year, the Baton Rouge Blues Festival continues to serve up a fiery mix of Louisiana blues and cuisine. Held in downtown Baton Rouge, the festival boasts four stages of continuous music. Featured performers in past years have included local greats such as E. Rodney Jones, Tabby Thomas, Rafal Neal, and Guitar Kelly. The Headliner stage features national acts; past performers have included Elvin Bishop and Dr. John. Admission to the festival is free, with performances running from noon to 7 p.m. on Saturday and noon to 8 p.m. on Sunday. In addition, many of Baton Rouge's finest restaurants will be selling their specialties at the festival. For more information: Baton Rouge Blues Festival, 730 North Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70821; (800) 527-6843.

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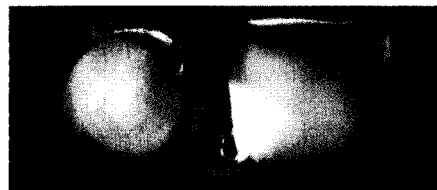
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the National Literary Society, "The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland." That lecture was followed in 1893 by the founding of the Gaelic League for the preservation and revival of the Irish Gaelic language. Until then Irish nationalism had been a political and not a cultural movement. This is one of the oddities—it may be one of the tragedies—of Irish history. In every comparable European country cultural nationalism came first, followed by the political kind.

Before the famine in the 1840s millions of Irish spoke Gaelic, a true "people's language." It was never spoken by the Protestant Ascendancy ruling class, among them the "patriots" of Henry Grattan and Henry Flood's time, in the 1780s—aristocratic, and rather artificial, rebels against English rule—and the 1798 rebels Tone and Lord Edward Fitzgerald. Nor did the intellectuals of Young Ireland in the 1840s speak it, which is why their contemporary Giuseppe Mazzini said that he could not take them seriously as nationalists if they had no language but that of their supposed oppressors; nor did the later leaders of the Home Rule party. The one exception among the leaders of Ireland had been Daniel O'Connell. And he, the man who practically created popular Catholic nationalism, was a native Gaelic speaker—but one who regarded the language as a sign of backwardness and a barrier to progress which he was happy to see die, as he expected it would.

On top of that, Gaelic Ireland was dealt a terrible blow by the famine; of the million who died and the million who emigrated immediately (apart from the millions more who followed), most were Gaelic-speaking. Those who were left behind felt their ancient language as an embarrassment, even a badge of shame. And so did the Irish who emigrated. They abandoned Gaelic the moment they set foot on American soil—in marked contrast to those who arrived speaking German, Italian, Yiddish, or Polish—and politically active Irish-Americans regarded the revival movement as an irrelevant distraction from the task of fighting the English.

So a hundred years ago Hyde and his fellow language zealots had a hard task. In one way they succeeded. In the years 1912–1922 parliamentary Home Rule nationalism was destroyed and supplanted by advanced revolutionary nationalism, which had closely identified itself with Gaelicness. There was a battle on by then. It wasn't so much between the Irish and their alien oppressors as within Ireland, between those who claimed to be Irish patriots while writing in English (of whom Yeats was the most distinguished example) and on the other side partisans of *The Hidden Ireland*, a once-famous book by Daniel Corkery which celebrated the Gaelic poets of eighteenth-century Munster but was more generally an attack on English-speaking Ireland.

Modern Irish nationalism took the side of this hidden Ireland, at least in theory. All the advanced nationalists learned Gaelic, some Gaelicized their names, Sinn Féin

called itself that. Once an independent government was set up in Dublin, in 1922, it proclaimed its adherence to this project of language revival, and when Eamon de Valera came to power, ten years later, the project was stepped up. Everyone entering government service or the professions had to pass an exam in Irish, and De Valera's 1937 constitution declared that Irish was the "first national language."

Today, a hundred years after the founding of the Gaelic League, that project has been a total failure. Cullen Murphy has described how an enthusiasm for the language continues ("The Irish Question," *The Atlantic Monthly*, September, 1985). This is true enough, as far as it goes. There is a lively Gaelic subculture, mostly in and around Dublin (which, as it happens, is the one part of Ireland where Gaelic has not been the main language since the Middle Ages), of mostly young, middle-class people. But these are intellectual mavens of the kind who might take up Esperanto or Latin. The larger truth is that a language that was spoken daily by millions two centuries ago, and by hundreds of thousands a century ago, is spoken today as an everyday tongue by fewer than 20,000 people.

And despite the myth that the Irish deep down have wanted their language back, those who do speak it aren't always admired. The pop singer Enya comes from the Gaeltacht, the small areas ("reservations" might be an unkind word) in the west where the language is kept going by heavy government subsidy. But to be a native Irish-speaker is to be branded as a "culchie," a primitive, rustic hick, and so the language's relentless decline continues. This is desperately sad—although a Saxon (*Sassenach*), I regard the Celtic languages as being part of my inheritance too—but there it is. The interesting question remains: Why was the revival attempted? Or, alternatively, why did it fail? And why was the pretense kept up that the language was being resuscitated when in fact it was dying?

It did not have to fail. Certainly, looking back a hundred years to Hyde's quixotic crusade, it may seem that the language was already in terminal decline; after all, a few hundred thousand speakers isn't very many. And yet, at the time the Gaelic League was founded, *no one* spoke Hebrew. (Journalistic hyperbole, but almost true. The Jews had their own demotic languages, principally Yiddish; Hebrew was the Jewish Latin, a sacred or literary language. Its revival had begun by 1893, but very few people were actually speaking it then.) A century later it is the everyday language of nearly five million people, more than the population of the Irish Republic.

The Irish chose not to speak Gaelic but to make it a national myth. One sees the consequences everywhere. I don't mean so much the street signs, or the names on a bus going from, say, Baile Átha Cliath to Loch Garman (or, as those on the bus would actually say, from Dublin to Wexford): after all, the use of place-names as a nation-

alist weapon can be found all over Europe, from Bosnia to the Baltic. What is uniquely Irish is the *cúpla focal*, the token or totemic use of Gaelic tags. There are all those official names, parties called Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, a Prime Minister called the Taoiseach and his deputy the Tánaiste, debates held in the Dáil (where, however, the Taoiseach would be discomposed if addressed in Gaelic).

Even more striking is official correspondence. Is there any other country on earth where such letters begin and end in one language—"A Chara . . . *Mise le meas*," equivalent to "Dear Sir or Madam . . . Yours faithfully"—but the body of the letter is in another language (since if it weren't in English the recipient wouldn't understand it)? And on the day the government fell last fall, after a debate in the Dáil, I noticed that the tellers announced the result as "*Sea* eighty-eight, *Níl* seventy-seven." That is, the "ayes" and the "nays" were in Gaelic, but the figures had to be said in English to be understood. Everyone in Ireland knows this, and no one comments on it. Everyone pays the language . . . lip service, I was about to say, but that's exactly wrong: the Irish will do anything for Gaelic except use their lips to speak it.

A language that was spoken daily by millions two centuries ago, and by hundreds of thousands a century ago, is spoken today as an everyday tongue by fewer than 20,000 people.

ROAD SIGN AT TIMOLEAGUE,
COUNTY CORK



FELIX ZASKA/THE SLIDE FILE

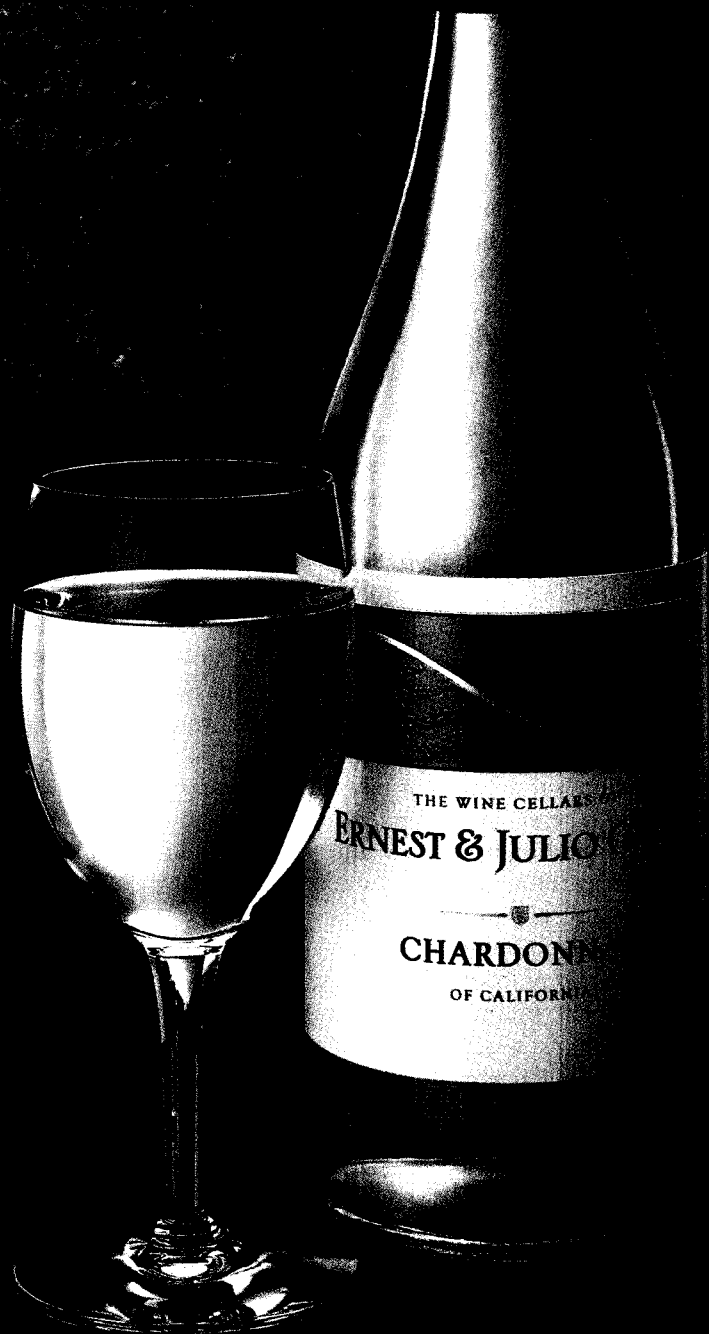
The Myth of the North

IN RATHER THE SAME WAY, LIP SERVICE IS PAID TO ANOTHER beautiful national legend, the myth of a "united Ireland," or at any rate of the "aspiration" toward unification. This has been part of the rhetoric of Irish nationalism for generations. Articles 2 and 3 of the 1937 constitution claim that the whole island of Ireland is the "national territory"; successive governments conducted propaganda campaigns against Partition; only two years ago, in part of a much larger judgment, the supreme court in Dublin surprised many people by ruling that the "reintegration" of the national territory anticipated by the constitution was a "constitutional imperative."

On another level this is all nonsense. The southern Irish have always felt an instinctive natural sympathy for the Catholic minority in "the North," and this feeling has occasionally burst into flame. A recent television program confirmed what was well known anyway: that in 1970 the Dublin Cabinet discussed sending troops into Northern Ireland to protect Catholics from what seemed an incipient pogrom, and two Ministers, Charles Haughey and Neil Blaney, did in fact channel money covertly to the IRA.



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The unintended (or not quite intended) consequence was to create the revived and much more violent Provisional IRA. Blaney now says, "I don't regret what I did, but I do regret that things have developed in such a way since then." Since "things" include more than 3,000 deaths (the equivalent, proportionally, of well over half a million American deaths), Blaney's regrets are certainly not misplaced. Then, after the shootings in Londonderry in 1972, rioters burned down the British embassy in Dublin.

Over the twenty years since the embassy was burned, there has been a palpable change of mood in Dublin, and not only on Neil Blaney's part. The Irish are bored with Ulster. (So are the British, but that's another matter.) For the presidential election of two years ago Fine Gael chose as its candidate Austin Currie, who comes from county Tyrone, in the North. Everyone who covered that election agrees that voters in Dublin and Cork were put off by this, by Currie's Ulster accent, and by almost everything else about him that reminded them of the North. This is largely the reason why the second largest party didn't benefit from the scandal that destroyed the chances of the Fianna Fáil candidate during that election, and the third-party candidate, Mary Robinson, of Labour, slipped through to win. An *Irish Times* poll conducted last November showed that only 35 percent of the Irish population reckoned official talks on the North important. The truth is that not only are the Irish bored by Ulster but they don't really want it. (Whether the British really want it is, once more, another matter.)

This statement—that the Irish do not sincerely want "re-unification"—seems to fly in the face of a powerful national instinct. But it is true, for several reasons. One is historical. In the late eighteenth century came the nationalist, or "patriotic," movement in Ireland—the patrician Protestant nationalism of Grattan and Flood. That was succeeded in the early nineteenth century by another Irish nationalist movement, this time the plebeian Catholic nationalism led by O'Connell. The latter succeeded the former only in a purely temporal sense, since they were radically different movements. And yet the plebeian Catholic nationalism inherited from the patrician Protestant patriotism certain tenets—the cultural homogeneity and the geographical indivisibility of the country—that made sense in Ascendancy terms, and in no others.

There are parallels elsewhere in Europe. A hundred years ago a Junker landlord assumed without thinking that his estate was part of Prussia, even though those who worked his land spoke Polish, and a Magyar petty noble insisted that his estates were in Hungary. So they were, once. There was, once, a great historic (not to say apostolic) kingdom of Hungary—a "united Hungary," if you like. The only trouble was that in large parts of this united Hungary the bulk of the population was not Hungarian at all but Slovak, Ukrainian, Romanian, or Serb. And that is why Hungary was partitioned—at exactly the same time that Ireland was partitioned—and why those former

Hungarian provinces are today Slovakia and parts of Ukraine, of Romania, and of Serbia.

In the same way, an "Irish" landowner—that is, from the claret-swilling, fox-hunting Anglican Ascendancy—could once regard his land as axiomatically part of Ireland, no matter whether his estate was in county Cork and those who worked the land Roman Catholics, or in county Down and those who worked it Presbyterians.

Although the Ascendancy landlord passed into history—along with the Junkers and the Magyar gentry, as it happens—he still haunts Ireland. It was his legacy that lingered after parliamentary Home Rule nationalism was superseded by the extreme republican nationalism of Sinn Féin. And so De Valera was able to maintain at once that Ireland was a Catholic, Gaelic nation *and* that it must be united: beautiful national myths both still revered by De Valera's successors. The real truth didn't elude everyone. Stephen Gwynn was a nationalist of the old school—a Dubliner, a Catholic, and a Home Rule MP for Galway. As Sinn Féin's more radical brand of nationalism was sweeping the country in 1918, Gwynn looked hard and said, "If Ireland as a nation means what De Valera means by it, then Ulster is not part of that nation." That is as true today as it was seventy-five years ago, and it is, I believe, instinctively understood by many southern Irish people. They know that a "united Ireland" is now a contradiction in terms and, oddly enough, a class concept, even if they can't quite express that as a conscious thought.

A ruling-class Irishman, that is, could and can overlook the brutish, populist nationalisms of Orange and Green. There is even a sporting illustration of this. In Ireland the sports that are politically correct in nationalist terms are Gaelic football and hurling, but no one except the Irish engages in them. Among international sports, soccer is a working-class game, and by no coincidence there are two separate soccer teams: the Irish Republic (doing very well just lately) and Northern Ireland. But the Irish national rugby team is one of the few effective institutions that are still organized on an all-Ireland basis, men from Belfast playing alongside men from Dublin and Cork. And that is quite simply because rugby is an upper-class—or at least a bourgeois—game.

The southern Irish silently understand something else. For seventy years Irish governments have condemned Partition. All that time, southern Ireland (the Free State, now the Republic) has enjoyed remarkable political stability and social tranquillity. Why is that?

The modern Irish state is coeval with several other European states, such as Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Those have all been beset by the same problem: communal conflict based on ethnicity, language, or religion. Nearly fifty years ago Czechoslovakia expelled millions of people who spoke the wrong language—the Bohemian Germans, who had lived there for many centuries—and Czechs and Slovaks have just gone through a none too friendly divorce. As to the fate of Yugoslavia, it doesn't

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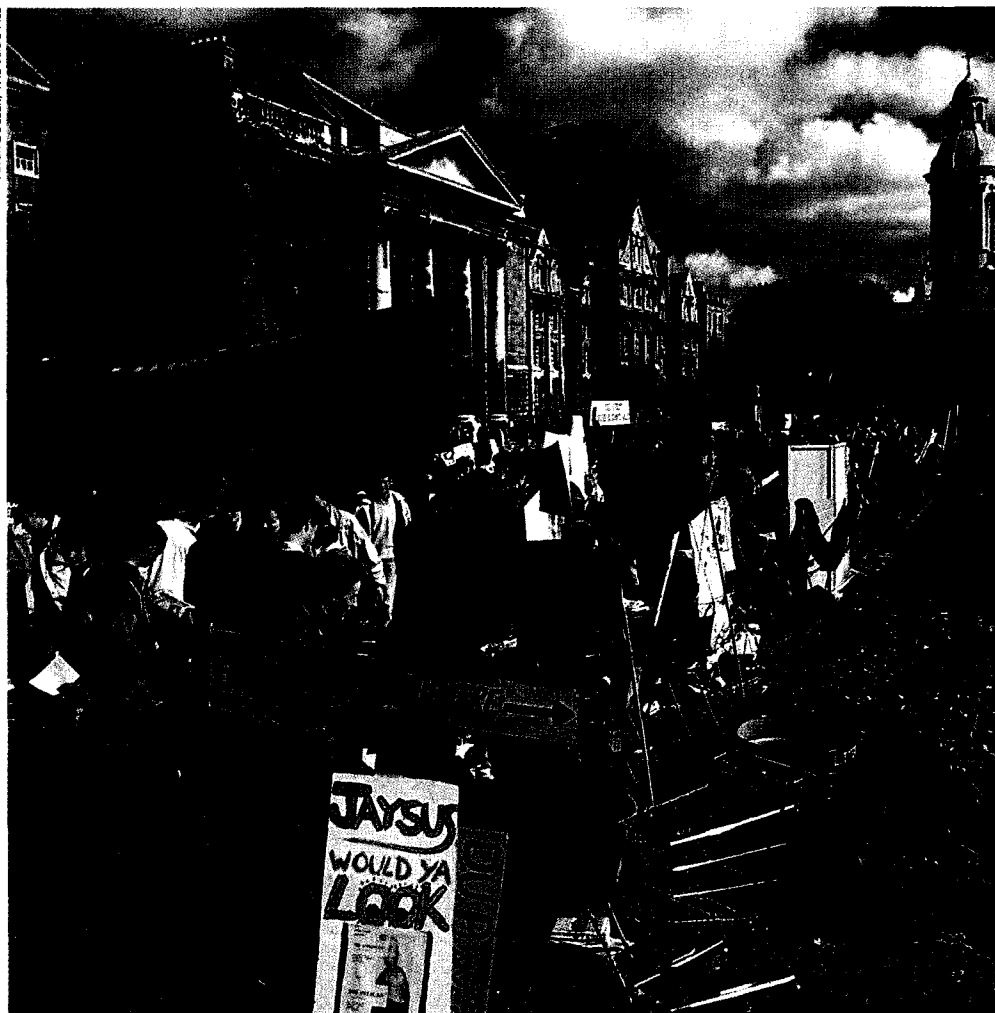
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PETER ZOLLER/THE SLIDE FILE



The power of the Church is still a reality, but in several measurable ways it is in decline, and no longer is the guiding principle of Irish politics “never to risk the clout of a crozier.”

PRO-CHOICE GLIMMERINGS,
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need dwelling on. What happened in Ireland? As J. J. Lee says in his full-scale recent history, *Ireland 1912–1985*, “Partition now saved the South from the most explosive internal problems subverting new states, race and religion, by the simple device of exporting them to the North.” Put another way, Partition was the best thing that could have happened to southern Ireland.

Still the beautiful national legends live on. In the negotiations between the Irish government and the northern Irish parties, which were initiated as part of the British government’s elaborate scheme for finding a way out of the Ulster impasse but which broke down just before the general election last November, Dublin said that Articles 2 and 3 were not negotiable. So they remain, embittering relations between North and South, a final irredentist claim on the territory of a neighbor which is not matched anywhere in Europe. That isn’t a casual point: plenty of other countries could claim neighbors’ territory. Hungary has, as I say, as good a claim to Slovakia and the Vojvodina of northern Serbia as Dublin has to “the Six Counties.” Austria has not only as good a historical claim to the South Tirol (Alto Adige or Südtirol, according to taste), which the Italians acquired after 1918, but a better one in na-

tional terms: the majority there is still German-speaking. Neither makes a formal claim, or would think of doing so.

There were Irishmen who were unhappy about Articles 2 and 3. One of the unsung Irish heroes of the century was J. J. McElligott, the Secretary of the Finance Department and the head of the civil service in Dublin from 1927 to 1953, and one of those who created an efficient, constitutional Irish state. In 1937 he strongly criticized the proposed irredentist claim. The articles were probably invalid in international law; they could only seem “to vitiate the Constitution, by stating at the outset what will be described, and with some justice, as a fiction”; and they would “not contribute anything to effecting the unity of Ireland, but rather the reverse.”

The Myth of Self-Sufficiency

IN HINDSIGHT THIS LOOKS NOT SO MUCH PRESCIENT as obvious, but it was too hard for De Valera to see. He was an endlessly fascinating man, of huge moral as well as physical stature, who is still part of Fianna Fáil’s, and Ireland’s, emotional capital. Dev’s greatness was real enough, but he is a problematic character, em-

bodying every one of the national myths that still bedevil the country. He had a very clear concept of what Ireland was, or rather of what Ireland should be. In fact, for all the precise mind of the math teacher that he had been, he managed to confuse “is” and “ought” to a degree unusual even for a politician.

He admitted as much himself. He famously said that when he wanted to know the wishes of the Irish people, he had only to look into his own heart. One of the most devout Catholics ever to govern any country, he was once asked how he would have felt if the Pope had excommunicated him (as might easily have happened during the civil war), and he answered, “I should have considered that His Holiness was misinformed.” And after one election he inimitably said what many politicians on the losing side must have felt like saying but didn’t dare: “Recently an opportunity was given in the elections to the people to declare their will. They did not declare that will as we know it to be their will.”

Maybe, then, it is not so surprising that De Valera had a knack for bypassing reality, which is his legacy to Irish political life. The distance from reality was most conspicuous fifty years ago, during the Hitler war. Throughout the war the Irish government observed a policy of strict if increasingly fictitious neutrality, despite considerable pressure from the British and American governments. The British more or less openly offered De Valera a united Ireland if he would join the Allied side, but he refused. Instead, he spent a good deal of time complaining about infringements of “Irish” sovereignty in Northern Ireland—for example, remonstrating with the U.S. ambassador when the first GIs arrived in Europe in 1942 and landed in Ulster.

His complaints were not well received. De Valera never grasped that the American government was always going to take the side of its British ally rather than of a small, neutral country. In 1940 Franklin Roosevelt sent David Gray as United States ambassador to Ireland, where he remained until 1947. Gray was a journalist and diplomatist, related by marriage to FDR; he formed an almost immediate dislike and poor opinion of De Valera, something that affected Irish-American relations, and when De Valera made his regular complaints, he was as regularly sent away with a flea in his ear. Nor did De Valera see that most Irish-Americans, like all other hyphenated Americans, were becoming more and more assimilated, and losing their Hibernian patriotic zeal apart from sentimental outings each March 17. On his American tour in 1920 he had founded the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic, but by 1938 the president of the association, Charles E. Russell, was warning him of the “general feeling” among Irish-Americans that southern Ireland “had won all she wanted . . . and why bother about Ulster anyway?” while one of De Valera’s American advisers also warned him (in an unfortunate phrase) not to “raise the fiery cross” of Partition in America anymore.

There was one other thing that De Valera did not grasp. The “Emergency,” as the Second World War was known in Dublin, exposed certain pretensions, or another beautiful myth. De Valera had positively longed for an international conflict that would complete Irish isolation. If only Ireland were cut off—in his words, “as if the country was surrounded by a wall”—she could surely survive and prosper, to the point, De Valera insisted, of supporting a much larger population. Neutrality was not a mere expedient; it was central to another national myth—one of uniqueness and self-sufficiency. Well, Ireland was cut off during the war, and could scarcely support its actual population. The safety valve of emigration was still needed, and it was just as well for Ireland, not to mention England, that large numbers of Irishmen served in the British forces or went to work in British industry, even if this wasn’t quite what the Easter 1916 rebels Patrick Pearse and James Connolly had had in mind thirty years before.

The myth of isolation was exposed militarily as well as economically. I call Irish neutrality somewhat fictitious, but—a point J. J. Lee hammers home—the fact was that, in striking contrast to other neutral countries, such as Sweden and Switzerland, the independent Irish state took almost no measures, and spent almost no money, to defend itself. Hitler would have thought twice about invading Switzerland—for its size, the best-defended country in Europe—but he would have walked over Ireland. And so De Valera’s state, having after centuries of struggle won its freedom from “England’s cruel Red,” was in the ignominious position of being objectively defended by the Royal Navy.

The Myth of Righteousness

ALL OF THIS IS WRITTEN WITH SOME HESITATION. There are those in Dublin who would say that a Saxon has no right to reflect critically on Ireland, given those centuries of oppression and struggle. As it happens, I agree that some English criticism of Ireland is vulgar and stupid, quite apart from the interminable, repellent tradition in which the English have not only oppressed the Irish but also sneeringly patronized them, a true case of adding insult to injury. At the same time, oddly enough, Irish hostility to England is itself another national myth. All opinion polls in Ireland show what any English visitor finds out for himself: that the Irish in general like the English and get on with them. After all, emigration was eastward as well as westward. With little more than three and a half million people living in the Irish Republic, there must now be more people of Irish descent in what Ulstermen call “mainland” Great Britain than in Ireland itself, and there can scarcely be a family in Ireland without cousins across the Irish Sea.

Some mutual resentment persists, and there are Englishmen, not to say Ulstermen, who still lament Ireland’s wartime neutrality. This is misguided. There was no rea-

son why Ireland should take an active part in any war, or why military conscription should have been introduced, in the North or the South. It was the attempt to impose conscription on Ireland in 1918—the last gasp of Tory Unionism at its most pigheaded—that finally turned feeling in all the provinces of Ireland in favor of Sinn Féin and republicanism (this was the only occasion on which a general strike has closed the whole country for twenty-four hours, including the bars). Neutrality was very widely supported in Ireland. The Anglo-Irish novelist Elizabeth Bowen, who occasionally reported to the British government about Irish opinion during the war, told London that neutrality was something more than “blindness, egotism, escapism or sheer funk.” So it was.

Indeed, De Valera’s national myths all supposed one central myth as a premise, essential but never stated: Ireland was *different*. Ireland was uniquely wronged, and uniquely righteous. Ireland could withdraw from the world, from the twentieth century and all its conflicts. And this withdrawal was not only practical but moral. The consequences of this belief were dubious. It was one thing to take no side in the war physically, and Irish neutrality made little practical difference (though the loss of the three treaty ports on the coast of the Free State, which the British had retained in 1922 but whose return De Valera had successfully demanded, was a serious disadvantage for the British and later the Americans in the campaign against German U-boats). It was another thing for De Valera to visit the German legation in Dublin, as he did in May of 1945, to convey the condolences of the Irish people on the death of the German leader, Adolf Hitler. De Valera said that he was “not going to add to his humiliation in the hour of defeat,” which showed a curious sense of proportion, or might seem like taking moral equivalence rather far.

But then, that itself was part of the republican, Fianna Fáil, De Valera tradition. The tradition is itself bred out of history, of the relations between England and Ireland, which I sometimes think resemble a really bad and unhappy marriage. Over the centuries England displayed all the worst male faults: brutishness, exploitation, selfishness, neglect. As a result Ireland became the eternal wronged woman, sunk in brooding, resentful, vengeful self-pity. Those are harsh words, but even a well-disposed outsider has to admit that Sean Lemass, the Prime Minister at the time, had a point when he said in 1960 that the Irish had “an undue disposition to be sorry for ourselves.” It might be possible to exaggerate the consequences of this, but exaggeration is unnecessary. Only one quotation is needed. It comes from the editorial column of an Irish newspaper—not an obscure fringe paper but the *Irish Press*, founded by De Valera to promote the Fianna Fáil cause and for many years the paper with the biggest circulation in Ireland. It was the *Irish Press* that assured its readers emphatically that “there is no kind of oppression visited on any minority in Europe which the Six County nationalists have not also endured.” Those words appeared in April of 1943.

They are quoted in his book by Lee, who adds a sour, donnish joke about how the comparison might have surprised those lined up in Auschwitz. But is it really funny? Isn’t there something quite sad and disturbing about someone who could write, and believe, that then? Even if the details of death camps weren’t yet revealed, enough was known about National Socialist treatment of “minorities” to make the comparison utterly grotesque—to anyone, that is, who wasn’t blinded by national mythology, the same blindness from which De Valera was still suffering in 1945. (In the 1950s the German writer Heinrich Böll traveled in the west of Ireland and found people who were still convinced that any stories of German misdeeds during the war were British propaganda.)

It was during the war that De Valera made the clearest statement of his beliefs about Ireland, and this year has seen another anniversary. On Saint Patrick’s Day in 1943 De Valera spoke to the Irish people on the radio—his “dream” speech:

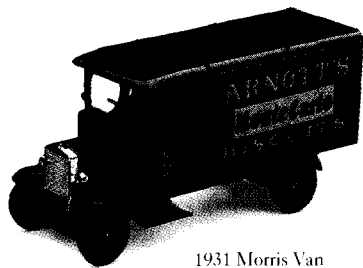
The Ireland which we have dreamed of would be the home of a people who valued material wealth only as a basis of right living, of a people who were satisfied with frugal comfort and devoted their leisure to things of the spirit; a land whose countryside would be bright with cosy homesteads, whose fields and villages would be joyous with the sounds of industry, with the romping of sturdy children, the contests of athletic youths, the laughter of comely maidens; whose firesides would be forums for the wisdom of serene old age. It would, in a word, be the home of a people living the life that God desires that men should live.

And so forth. It would be easy to mock this, but I don’t. De Valera’s dream was not ignoble—only absurd.

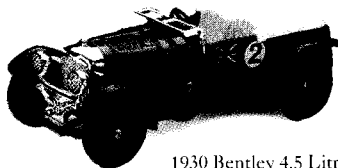
Dublin 4

JUST HOW ABSURD YOU NEED TO GO TO IRELAND AND see, in the last decade of the twentieth century—a hundred years after the Gaelic League was founded, seventy years after Partition and independence for the Free State, fifty years after De Valera’s dream speech. Ireland is in many ways gravely troubled at present. The economy is suffering from the usual contemporary problems of recession and unemployment. Unemployment is shockingly high, approaching 20 percent, and would be higher if it weren’t for the continuing safety valve—or is it a hemorrhage?—of emigration. The punt, or Irish pound, was decoupled from the English pound some time ago; it went to a discount against sterling and then to a premium. But at the end of last January heavy currency speculation against the punt forced a 10 percent devaluation.

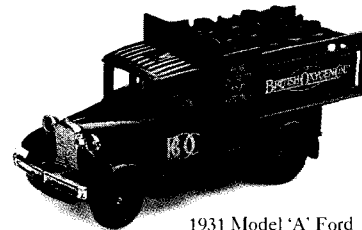
This was a double blow. It was a painful reminder that Ireland still lives economically as well as culturally in the shadow of England’s cruel Red: devaluation of the punt directly followed a cut in British interest rates. And it was a blow to Ireland’s new faith in “Europe.” Ireland is a



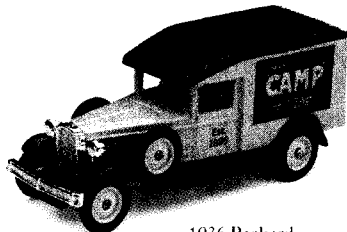
1931 Morris Van



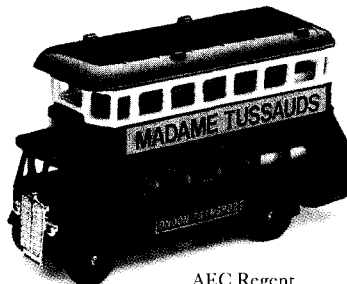
1930 Bentley 4.5 Litre



1931 Model 'A' Ford Stake Truck



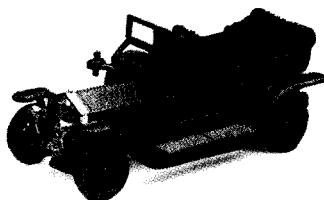
1936 Packard



AEC Regent Double Deck Bus



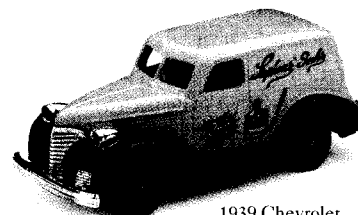
1934 Dennis Fire Engine



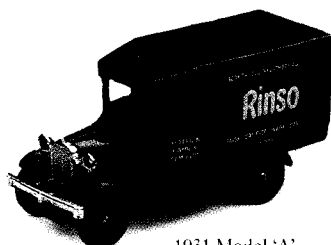
1907 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost



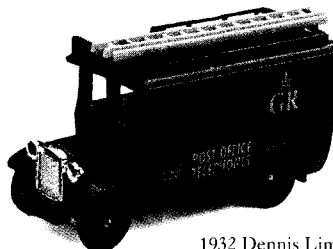
1920 Model 'T' Ford Van



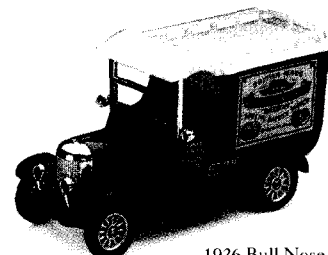
1939 Chevrolet Panel Van



1931 Model 'A' Ford Van



1932 Dennis Limousine



1926 Bull Nose Morris Van

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member of the European Community, and was one of the countries that held referenda last year to ratify the Maastricht Treaty, which further centralizes the Community. In France the referendum only just passed, in Denmark it failed, and a referendum almost certainly would have failed in Germany or Great Britain if one had been held in either country. But in the Irish Republic the referendum passed by an easy majority. There is a simple, though rather depressing, explanation: Ireland is geographically on the northern fringes of Europe, but economically it counts as a Mediterranean country. Along with Portugal, Spain, and Greece, it is heavily dependent on the "cohesion" funds and other financial support that Brussels redistributes from rich countries to poor. As a result, the Irish are besotted with "Europe." There is a comical echo of this in the otherwise uncomical and unattractive memoirs just published by the American woman who had a child by the former bishop of Galway. At one point in their turbulent liaison she recalls his saying to her that thanks to their affair, "my life has gone topsy-turvy. . . . Many European Community grants I was working on for the diocese have fallen through." On another occasion he was worried about losing some notebooks: nothing so dull as theological meditations but "official papers from my last EEC meeting." That much in the lady's kiss-and-tell account rings true. Alas, Ireland learned on January 30 that its own sense of its virtue was worth nothing financially, and that Irish loyalty to Europe wasn't reciprocated to the extent that the Bundesbank would back the punt as it did the French franc.

For all that, Ireland remains a delightful country, at least to visit. People who live here have their own problems. They have to put up with what a visitor escapes—lower incomes (for journalists, notably) and higher taxes than in neighboring countries. The flow of emigrants is now particularly acute among young professionals and educated people: a striking contrast to the situation a century ago, and an ominous one. Quite apart from New York and Boston, every newspaper office in London—and every other BBC program—hums with Irish voices. This is good for us and for them. But, again, it is not what Patrick Pearse had in mind. One particular contribution of his to the myth of national virtue was to condemn emigration: "Let us plainly tell the emigrant that he is a traitor to the Irish State, and, if he but knew all, a fool into the bargain." That was eloquently said, but it was not how it seemed to the Connemara man making good in Chicago or Sydney a century ago, or how it seems to the young Dublin graduate working in either place today.

For all the economic difficulties, my Dublin friends are pleased by the way Ireland is going. Those who can remember the Ireland of forty years ago, or even twenty, remember the stifling atmosphere, the economic backwardness, the political stasis, the religious repression. Those things have certainly changed, and not just because the books describing that old Ireland, by authors from Joyce

to Edna O'Brien, can now be read in Ireland. The tone of political culture had changed well before Reynolds began to talk of the end of civil-war politics. "Albert," as the Prime Minister is universally and not quite respectfully referred to, is a mildly absurd figure, with a self-made fortune from dance halls and pet food and a tendency to say "crap" in interviews. He is certainly less colorful than his immediate predecessor, Charles J. Haughey, who survived the 1970 arms scandal to become Prime Minister in 1979. After a very checkered career in and out of office, Haughey was finally obliged to resign early in 1992. In the 1970s and 1980s he was the definitive figure of Irish politics, as De Valera had been a generation earlier. His was a very different Ireland indeed—a long way from the original Fianna Fáil traditions, devout and puritanical, of De Valera, who said that no man was worth more than a thousand a year (say, \$75,000 now) and who praised "things of the spirit" and "frugal comfort."

Visiting Dublin in the Haughey years, I was reminded less of Dev's dream speech than of another prophecy. Writing more than a hundred years ago, Standish O'Grady—a remarkable Irishman who favored cultural but not political nationalism—warned where the nationalist movement was heading. It might lead to bloody anarchy, he predicted, or, on the other side, to "a shabby, sordid Irish republic ruled by knavish, corrupt politicians and the ignoble rich." By the 1980s those were haunting words.

My friends regard the knavish politicians of Fianna Fáil with genial disdain—but then, my friends are from "Dublin 4." Not that most of them actually live in that south-side postal district: Dublin 4 is a place of the spirit. The phrase is journalistic shorthand, like "Greenwich Village" or "Palm Beach" or "Hampstead." "Dublin 4" means prosperous liberals, professionals, and mediocrats. These are people who have consciously or unconsciously rejected the beautiful national myths of their country. They don't speak Irish, of course; they have no time at all for "the reintegration of the national territory"; they dislike the puritanism and narrowness of old Ireland; they are mildly—or more than mildly—anti-clerical. They probably voted Labour in November; they certainly voted against continuing the ban on abortion. And although they did not prevail in that referendum, my friends think that one day the laws criminalizing abortion, and divorce and homosexuality, will go. The future is on their side, they believe.

They may be right. Where Dublin 4 leads, "greater Dublin" follows, and with about a third of the population of the republic now living in greater Dublin, it in turn leads the rest of the country. No doubt at all, Dublin has changed very much in the past twenty-five years. From being the pious capital of a pious country, it is on its way to being as pagan as any other European city; church attendance has declined substantially. In cinematic terms this is now the city of *The Commitments*, Alan Parker's profane, funny movie about rock and sex in the grim housing estates of north Dublin; the Dublin of *The Dead*, John

Although Ireland doesn't yet have as highly developed a "heritage industry" as England (that would be difficult), the country has found its own way of living in the past.



JAMIE BLANDFORD/THE SLIDE FILE

DUBLIN KITSCH:
SWEET MOLLY MALONE

Huston's elegaic last film, from the Joyce story, is as remote as ancient Greece.

There are other signs of change. One was the election as President of Mary Robinson, a liberal-minded woman lawyer, something hard to imagine not long ago (even if, as I have mentioned, her election was to an extent accidental). Another sign is the career of Conor Cruise O'Brien. Arguably the greatest living Irishman and certainly the country's most distinguished intellectual export commodity, O'Brien grew up in the patriotic Irish tradition. He is an Irish Catholic in the technical sense that Catholic Ireland is his "little platoon," and a Gaelic-speaker (which is more than can be said for many a fire-eating republican) whose wife, Máire MacEntee, is a distinguished Gaelic poet. He won't, I trust, mind being cited as the bravest and best advocate of Dublin 4, even if he, too, lives in another *quartier*.

For twenty years O'Brien has analyzed and when necessary denounced all those beautiful national legends, pointing out the absurdity and worse of the republican attitude to the North, attacking—with physical as well as moral courage—the violent mythomanes of the IRA, sniping at clerical power. What's more, after suffering a

good deal of obloquy for his pains, he has been remarkably successful in altering the political climate. The irredentist articles of the constitution are still there, but the atmosphere of Dublin has quite changed from the early 1970s, when the Irish equivalent of radical chic was fellow-traveling with the Provos. That fashion has gone. The power of the Church is still a reality too, but in several measurable ways it is in decline, and no longer is the guiding principle of Irish politics "never to risk the clout of a crozier" by offending the bishops. This is very admirable, and more than admirable.

And yet, when I stand in Dublin and look around me at modern Ireland, I am haunted by a question: *What was it all for?*

The Myth of Modern Ireland

FOR CENTURIES IRELAND WAS RULED OR MISRULED by England, and struggled to get its own back. After the Union, which joined Ireland politically with Great Britain in 1801, O'Connell campaigned for repeal, which is to say for an autonomous Parliament, which is to say for the rights of the Catholic majority, and

Before it leaves it gets the OK

Walk around the Marysville, Ohio plant where they build the Honda Accord and you'll notice signs that read, "Who is my customer?"

Now, if you were to pose that question to anyone working there, they'd tell you that it's the people following them at the next stage of the manufacturing process.

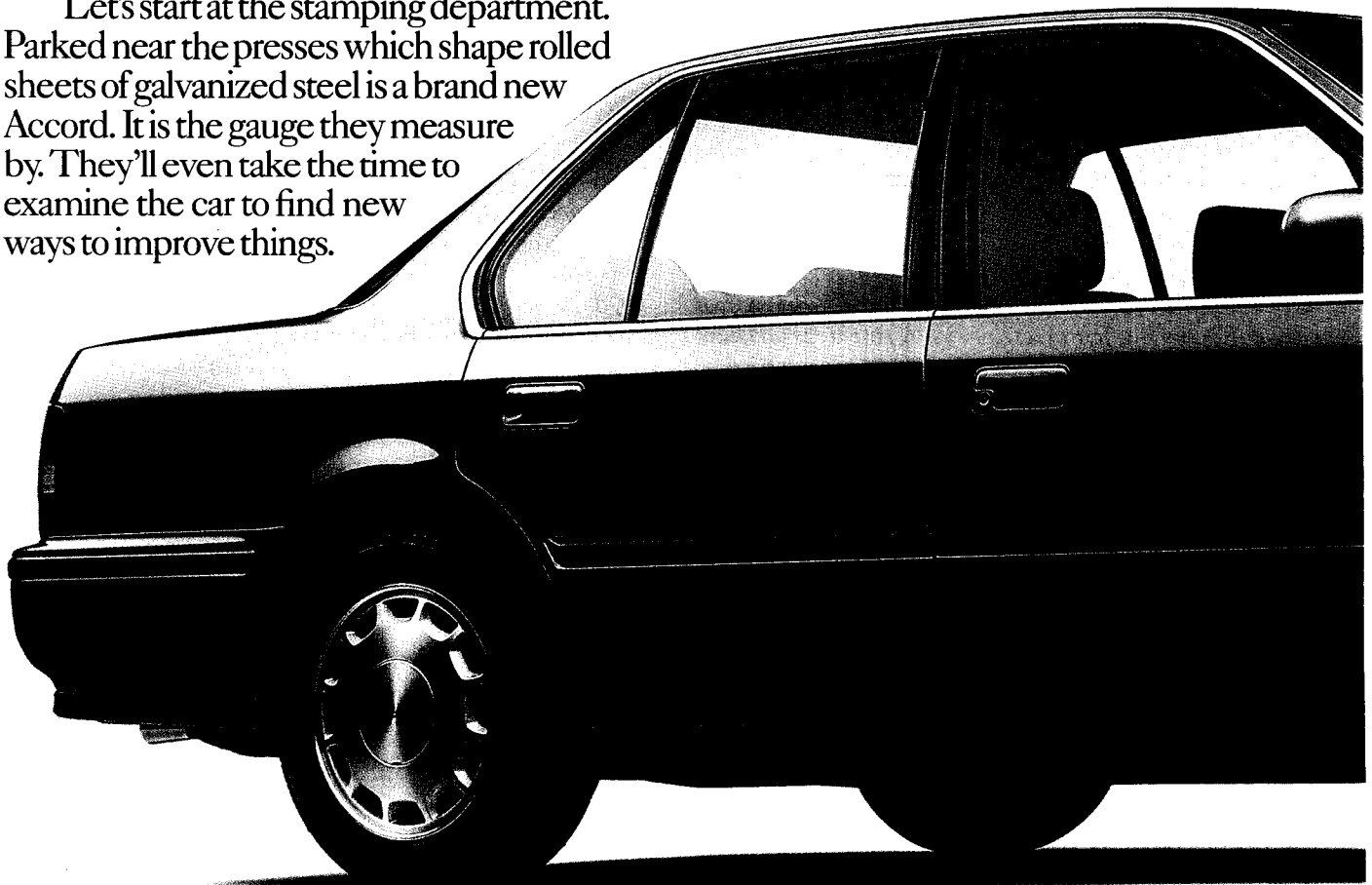
And they have to go out of their way to please some pretty tough clients.

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wind noise, or rather the lack of it.

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The Accord Sedan

 **HONDA**



*Ward's Automotive Reports, Model Year 1990, 1991, 1992. ©1992 American Honda Motor Co., Inc.

his Catholic Association was one of the first great popular movements in the history of modern European nationalism. Later in the century the nationalist movement fought for Home Rule, and in this century a far higher degree of autonomy than O'Connell or Parnell had ever dreamed of (in the end, an independent republic) was achieved in most of Ireland. What, then, was the point of independence?

Look back once more. English oppression had taken different forms: political, economic, religious, cultural. By the lights of those who created it, the Union of 1801 was an attempt to temper the political oppression. Its actual effect was ironical. I believe it was the late F.S.L. Lyons who once said that the Union was to the nationalist a deed of subjection, to the unionist a failed but noble experiment, and to the dispassionate historian the essential factor that made possible the creation of the modern Irish state. Then the English tried to right the wrong of religious oppression by removing the privileges of the Protestant Church of Ireland while emancipating and even cosseting the Catholic Church.

They tried also to right the economic wrong: at the end of the nineteenth century Tory governments began to buy out the landlord class. Too late to make amends for the famine, this was anyway a classic case of trying to subvert a demand for political power by economic means. It also turned into a classic demonstration of the law of unintended consequences. The Tories' land reforms didn't keep Ireland in the Union, or even in the Empire or Commonwealth. What they did instead was to turn the Irish from a mass of destitute starvelings and outlaws into a nation of small farmers and traders—and in the process turned Ireland into the most socially conservative country in Western Europe. All the same, political independence has had its own unintended economic consequences. Ireland now has the worst of both worlds. In terms of international trade and finance, it remains a client state—of the City of London and, increasingly, of Frankfurt. And the southern Irish people have surrendered advantages, such as a developed welfare state, that are enjoyed by even the poorest parts of the United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland.

Quite possibly, if they had stayed around long enough, the English might have turned their minds to rectifying the cultural oppression and ruination of Gaelic Ireland. Odd though it may be to say so, it is possible that had Ireland remained in the Union, the Gaelic language would have fared better. At any rate, considerably more people now speak Welsh daily (thanks partly to my help as a British taxpayer, which I don't begrudge) than speak Irish Gaelic.

What has in fact happened? At the end of the twentieth century Ireland is in name an independent national state, but otherwise most of the hopes of earlier nationalists have proved illusory. Ireland is little less under British economic hegemony today than it was at the time

of the Easter Rising; it is far more under English cultural hegemony. The project of reviving the Irish language has been a total and ignominious failure. And it is a bitter irony that Ireland is now united in one sense, which is culturally. That's to say, South and North, Green and Orange, Catholic and Protestant, are united by the international Anglo-American mass culture of television and tabloid. To the young people of Ireland, even if they can't buy her book, the name Madonna now means a talentless singer in absurd clothes, rather than the Holy Mother of God.

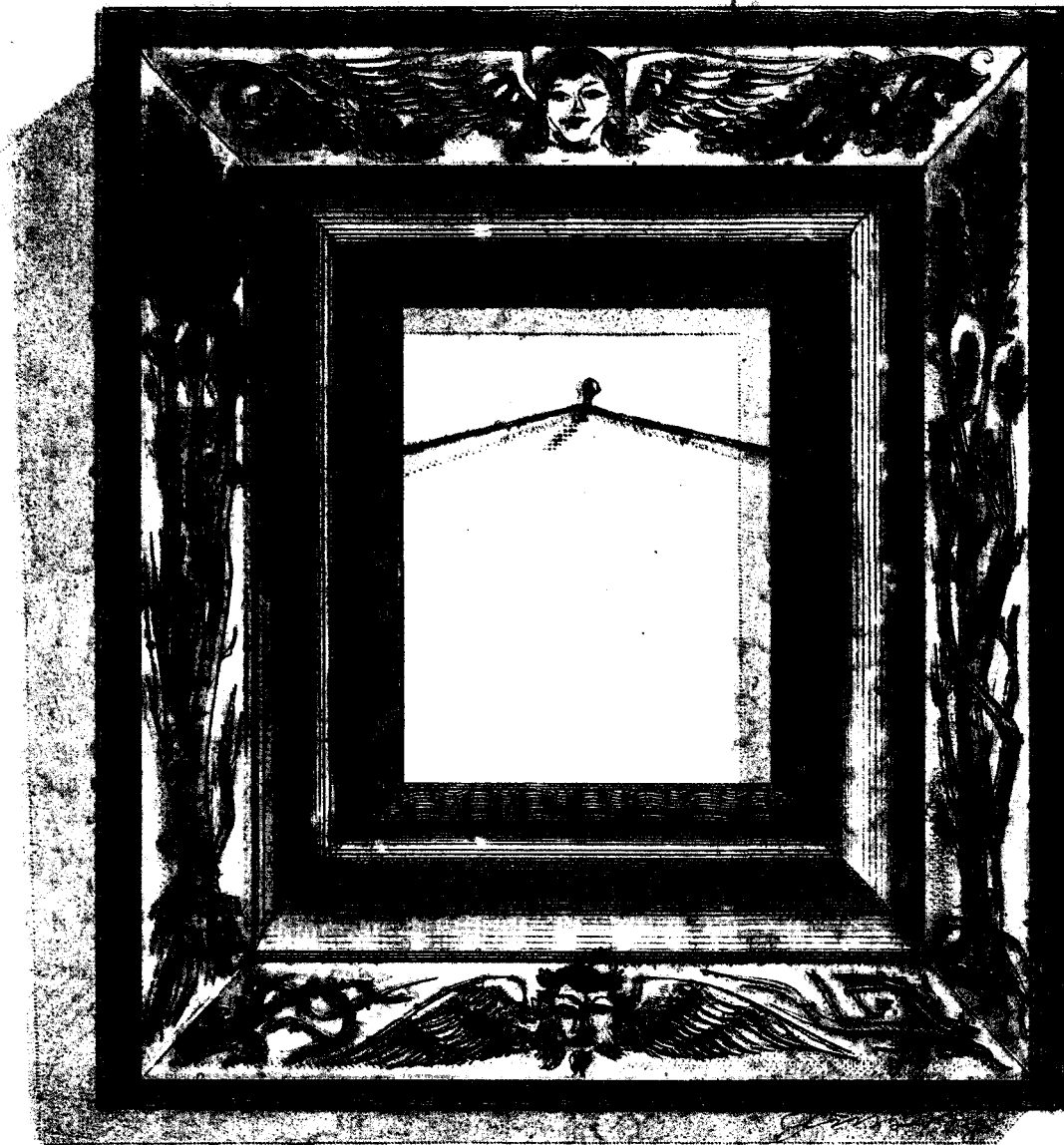
Dublin 4 half welcomes this: not the cult of Ms. Ciccone as such, but anything that takes them away from the old Ireland, the backward, superstitious country where (as was widely reported in the southwest only a few years ago) people saw statues of the Blessed Virgin which moved. Some Irish men and women are embarrassed by all that, and even by other examples of the way Catholicism is woven into the fabric of Irish life which I find touching. This is the only country I know where a phone-in radio show at election time is interrupted at noon for the Angelus, which also precedes the six o'clock television news. Against that, liberal, progressive Irish people have constructed their own dream of modern Ireland. As a visitor—an English Protestant and a product of "progressive" liberal civilization—I'm not so sure. Given those economic and cultural failures, isn't Catholicism—and Catholicism of the old Hiberno-Roman kind—the last genuine distinguishing mark Ireland has? The Church of Rome may have been reactionary and repressive. But it was the one institution that held the Irish together socially, that (once the Gaelic language was mortally wounded) distinguished them from their English rulers culturally, and that gave them their self-respect psychologically.

When that goes, what will be left? What will Ireland be? What will the Irish be but "West Britons," barely distinguishable from the people of southern England except in that they speak English with a discernible accent and—privately and occasionally—practice a different religion (like Scottish Presbyterians)? Mary Robinson and the Labour Party leader, Dick Spring, are admirable people, but it's hard to see what distinguishes them from men and women on the right of the British Labour Party (or the left of the Tory Party)—or why they would want to be distinguished.

These are the poignant and somber thoughts that come to me as I sit in a hotel room on Molesworth Street, opposite the Dáil in Leinster House, writing some inconsequential newspaper piece about day-to-day Irish politics. De Valera's dream was, as it turned out, a dream that did not come true, and one that could always be called absurd and illogical. Is the dream of modern Ireland—the new national myth—any more logical, or any less absurd, than De Valera's dream? And has it anything more to offer Ireland? □

Reflections on the way to a singular place where visual art, physics, and dance converge

BEAUTIFUL THEORIES



BY MINDY ALOFF

IN THE LATE 1970S E. H. GOMBRICH, THE AUTHOR of *Art and Illusion* and *The Story of Art*, visited Portland, Oregon, to deliver a public lecture. The following day a journalist met him in a large, dark, and otherwise empty banquet hall. This interview was Gombrich's last official obligation in Portland, and the reporter noticed that he looked haggard. But she wasn't fazed. She had taken exception to some of the ideas in his books, and she was going to grill him. So she did: What exactly do you mean by "perception"? Why

can't art make a statement? How can you say *that* about abstraction? After half an hour she had him hunched over and staring at the half-moon in one of his thumbnails. Then she made a breakthrough: she posed a question that provoked him to drop his mantle of pre-war courtesy and answer her in a voice that was soured with true vexation. The question was "How can you believe in absolute beauty?" Here is a portion of his reply:

"The accepted view since Romanticism is that beauty is wholly relative and that every age and every nation has

its different ideals. This was the way in which the classical ideal of beauty was undermined. I think this has by now been much overstated. I do think that there is a normal biological reaction to health and harmony and beauty which transcends the different culture modifications. . . . I haven't gone into it and wouldn't go out on a limb to say, 'This must be so.' But if you look at Indian miniatures, or Persian, or if you look—and that is a less savory subject—at the success of pinup girls. . . . it seems to me very unlikely that every human being could become a pinup girl. I do believe that there are objective criteria from an objective basis, both in perception—I don't believe that people always saw the world differently—and in beauty."

I was that reporter, and I remember now how Gombrich's answer set my teeth on edge. What is "normal"? How could Gombrich link Persian miniatures and pinup girls? What could a Caucasian woman in the Pacific Northwest in 1977 possibly share with either the artists or the models of art from across the world five centuries ago?

Yet I also remember the annoyance in his voice; and in looking at the bare text of his remarks on the yellowing newsprint, I am struck by how little of that tone survives explicitly in his words. "I think this has by now been much overstated": what a way to say "Help! Let me out of here!" If you didn't know the dynamics of the interview itself, you'd never guess that this was the naked moment in our hour-long confrontation—naked in the sense that the disclosure of anger can be a kind of intimacy. I have the urge to reach back to my younger self and shake her. "Listen to him," I want to say. "Especially since you're of another persuasion. Consider his proposition that beauty is not a product of style, or craft, or degree of seriousness in the artist, but rather a universal subject, as recognizable as a tree, regardless of the context—Persian, pop, paradise, pulp—and that to recognize it is a mark of health. Consider the discrepancy between your use of 'beauty' to mean some disembodied abstraction and his immediate and unswerving location of it in the human form. Consider his implication that some things about life are not relative, that people aren't always strangers to one another, that values which may have a local origin in this or that civilization may universally endure. And for God's sake, lighten up."

Of course, it is possible that in the intervening years Gombrich, who is now eighty-four, may have revised his views on the matter. I, who am roughly half his age, have certainly revised mine. Yet no individual recension could be as dramatic as the circumstances giving rise to the conversation itself. First of all, E. H. Gombrich has become so famous and so much revered that he is practically a myth in his own lifetime. (When I called the New York Public Library to check his age, the art librarian who performed the research prefaced his answer with "You won't believe this, but E. H. Gombrich is still alive!") It would

be unlikely today that a cub reporter from an alternative weekly would have access to him alone, for an hour, anywhere in the United States. Even if such access were granted, it seems unimaginable that any newspaper, even an alternative weekly, would publish his theoretical speculations without a critical framework, especially since those remarks contravene our received ideas about relativism, ethnicity, and sexual politics. In addition, his own critical temper is out of date. Gombrich felt his answer deeply, yet he articulated it with detachment, and with patience and clarity as well. One knows exactly where he stands. Much of the arts criticism I read now is impatient and ambivalent; it sounds engaged until you try to sort out its principles and realize that its arguments are based on contradictory premises conjoined by grammar and syntax. When you try to hold them in mind, the construction won't bear the weight of memory, and collapses, like a castle of sand.

To a large extent this reflects the fragmentation that in the past quarter century has affected our lives on every level. If I were going to interview Gombrich in 1993, I would probably do it by phone, and he and I would each probably receive several interruptions from call waiting, and I would probably follow up with faxed queries, one or more of which would probably be lost in the course of transmission.

Also, I wouldn't ask him directly what he thought about "beauty": I'd break down the question, come to the point for the reader on the go. I'd ask him what he thought of the Museum of Modern Art's Matisse retrospective. Or I'd bring up *The Crying Game*. It's improbable that Gombrich has run out to see *The Crying Game*, but sometimes people do surprise you. Say he had seen it. I'd ask him what he thought of the moment when the terrorist looks at a snapshot of his hostage's girlfriend—a knockout—and the hostage, noticing the other guy's interest, says, "She's not your type," to which the terrorist replies, "She's anybody's type." The movie succeeds (or, depending on your taste, fails) because both statements turn out to be true. And now I can feel my younger self plunging her arms through time to shake *me*. "Okay," she says, "where does E. H. Gombrich stand on *that*? And do you, Older Self, mean to equate the beauty of intellectual argument with the beauty of women's bodies? Who's dealing in 'disembodied abstraction' in this thing we call identity, anyway?"

WHEN THERE'S A FRACAS LIKE THIS GOING ON AT home, it can be helpful to take a walk in a new neighborhood. I found one: theoretical nuclear physics, embodied in *Dreams of a Final Theory*, a book published this past winter by Steven Weinberg, one of the winners of the Nobel Prize for physics in 1979 (for work on elementary particles) and the author of another physics book for the general reader, *The First Three Minutes* (an account of the Big Bang theory). Theoretical



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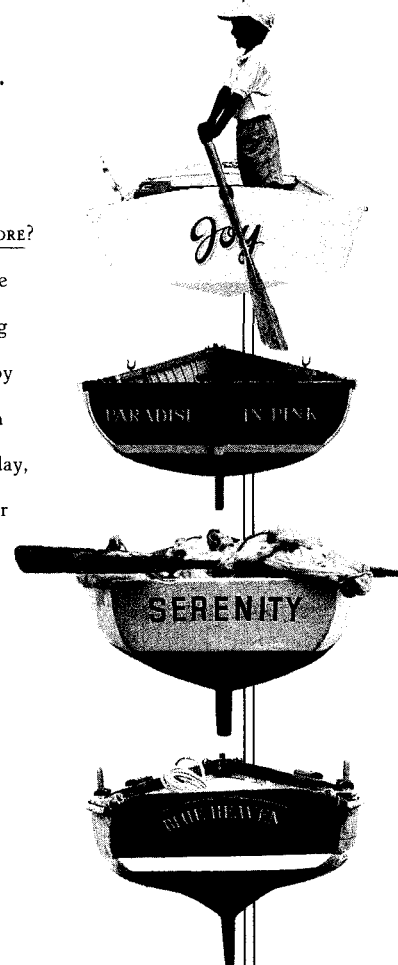
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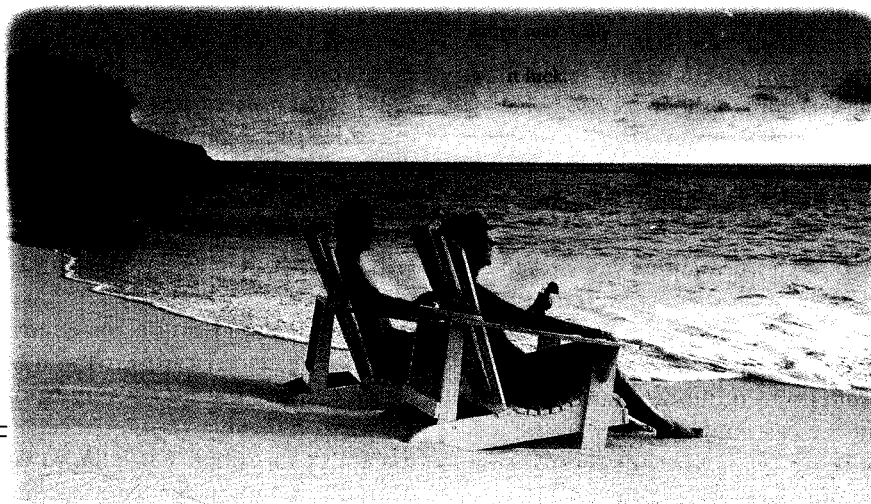
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physics is about as new a neighborhood for me as downtown Calcutta or the rose gardens of Shiraz. I've never taken a physics course; in fact, I studied no science of any kind after tenth-grade chemistry. One of the virtues of Weinberg's book is that it is able to communicate to a scientific ignoramus, and does so because of the same qualities inherent in Gombrich's communication—detachment, patience, and clarity, organically connected by deep commitment to the subject. As it happens, for Weinberg, too, beauty of an objective sort is central to his commitment.

In order to explain the nature of that connection, one needs to give a sense of the book at large—of its mission. The argument of *Dreams* can be baldly described as follows. Weinberg wants the federal government to make good on its promise—confirmed by congressional vote—to invest in a big machine, a particle accelerator, called the superconducting supercollider, which would cost some \$8 billion over a decade. The reason to buy the machine is that physicists working on elementary particle theory need it to gather evidence that will support or refute a group of theories about the way the universe works at the level of strong and electroweak forces—the bedrock level of the field, in both the Heisenbergian and the academic senses of the word. The physicists value these theories (which currently hang fire as probable speculations) because their reconciliation would bring into logical alignment several irreducible principles fundamental to what the very term “physics” has come to mean. If these principles could be logically reconciled, the result would be a grand unified theory of the behavior of the elementary particles of the universe—a solution that working physicists often refer to by its acronym, GUT, and that is also the “final theory” of Weinberg's dreams.

Weinberg believes that the principles can be reconciled in his lifetime—perhaps as soon as the end of the century—through the symbiotic process of theory and experiment, the findings of one giving rise to explorations in the other until a coherent equilibrium on paper becomes reproducible in the lab. And they *ought* to be reconciled (here is where beauty comes in) not because they will necessarily make our lives easier or even because they will make physicists' careers flourish but rather because intellectual adventure on the highest level is, in itself, necessary to the spiritual nourishment of our society

as a whole. “It is when we study truly fundamental problems that we expect to find beautiful answers,” Weinberg writes.

We believe that, if we ask why the world is the way it is and then ask why that answer is the way it is, at the end of this chain of explanations we shall find a few simple principles of compelling beauty. We think this in part because our historical experience teaches us that as we look beneath the surface of things, we find more and more beauty. Plato and the neo-Platonists taught that the beauty we see in nature is a reflection of the beauty of the ultimate, the *nous*. For us, too, the beauty of present theories is an anticipation, a premonition, of the beauty of the final theory. And in any case, we would not accept any theory as final unless it were beautiful.

*Beauty is a guidepost,
a sign that we are on
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spiritual vitality.*

Just as Gombrich linked beauty in art to the larger issue of what human beings hold in common, so Weinberg links beauty in physics to the larger issue of what the human mind seeks to understand. “The physicist's sense of beauty is also supposed to serve a purpose,” he writes. “It is supposed to help the physicist select ideas that help us to explain nature.” In other words, for both Gombrich and Weinberg, beauty is not an end in itself; it is a guidepost, a sign that we are on the right road to a more encompassing goal—happiness, wisdom, spiritual vitality. It is an indication of deeper needs that we can barely articulate without traducing them—making them sound trivial, pompous, or

banal—in a world where to admit need is taken as another kind of sign, a sign of weakness.

When the drive to appear invincible, to be certain, overrides the impulse to express such weakness, beauty can seem no more substantial than a greeting card. “In the last analysis, the acid test for any scientific theory is its empirical validity, and beauty be damned,” the physicist Roger S. Jones contends in his recent book, *Physics for the Rest of Us*. He concludes: “Accuracy, not aesthetics, is the ultimate criterion for science.” Jones speaks for many contemporary artists as well as for some contemporary scientists. But he does not speak for those to whom we keep returning for guidance. For example, he does not speak for Albert Einstein, to whom Weinberg is admittedly indebted for his identification of beauty with scientific persuasiveness. To embrace accuracy as the ultimate goal of truth, in any sphere, does appeal to the part of us that pleasures in mastery—in being able to color

within the lines. This mastery is crucial to human development on an intellectual as well as a physiological level, but it is not as freeing as the notion of playfulness—of improvisation—for which one has to throw away the coloring books and begin with a blank page, a ready hand, and an open mind. I'm not saying that science should not be accurate; I'm taking issue with the fiat that accuracy is all, even in such a field as theoretical nuclear physics. Einstein, through Weinberg, has given me the confidence to make the objection, regardless of my impoverished scientific background—that is, he has persuaded me that there is a grand ongoing human conversation between art and science in which I, and other general readers, can participate and learn and grow. Indeed, the tragic implication of Weinberg's book is that his belief in the inevitable discovery of a grand unified theory will foreclose the possibility of a certain kind of improvisation for himself and his peers. His recognition of that foreclosure affords his argument for beauty—and for the superconducting supercollider which that beauty underwrites—a touching humility.

Weinberg cautions against using the physicists' criteria for a beautiful proof as an exemplar for artists, and I think he is judicious to do so. Artists have too many exemplars now. They can see the history of art in slides; they can follow the history of dance on video screens; they can hear the history of music on a Sony Walkman. The impulse to make art may begin in the need for self-expression, but it ends in the attempt to reconstitute what one thinks the world has lost—to make it new. Yet we live at a moment when so much from the past is being found that "new," like "beauty," has become a term drained of meaning. Still, Weinberg also makes a point that may prove relevant to the education of audiences for art—the audiences from which artists themselves emerge. He draws a distinction between beauty and elegance. "The quality that mathematicians and physicists sometimes call elegance," he writes, "achieves a powerful result with a minimum of irrelevant complication." But a beautiful proof need not be elegant in this way. For example, "The equations of general relativity are notoriously difficult to solve except in the simplest situations, but this does not detract from the beauty of the theory itself." Far more fundamental to a theory's beauty than an uncomplicated proof is the simplicity of its basic ideas. Newton's theory of gravitation involves three equations; Einstein's involves fourteen.

Newton's is the more elegant. Yet, as Weinberg argues, Einstein's is the more beautiful, owing to "the simplicity of his central idea about the equivalence of gravitation and inertia." Elegance, like intelligence, breeds admiration. Simplicity, like depth of human feeling, stimulates conviction and love. Is it an accident that some of the most intelligent figures in our century have cherished simplicity? And by "simplicity," I mean something particular—not simplemindedness, not minimalism, not utilitarian geometry, not stripped-down style. I mean emotional and spiritual integrity, of the sort that Kierkegaard referred to in his title "The Purity of Heart Is to Will One Thing." I mean a quality that, if one is open to it, may be apprehended with the speed of feeling, regardless of the degree of elaboration in its projection as theory or design.

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HOW DOES A PERSON BRED on the glamour of complexity retol to appreciate simplicity? If you were a modern dancer, I might send you to learn how to perform Martha Graham's back fall on one count. Mechanically this is one of the hardest movements in Graham's vocabulary, but dramatically it is her trump card. Having someone on stage suddenly plummet backward in the blink of an eye is one of the simplest and most powerful effects Graham ever devised. It is pure emotion made visible; it is beautiful. The choreographer likened the feeling of the back fall to the moment when you walk into a room and, to your shock, spot a person for whom

you hold a hopeless passion. The very sight is stunning, she explains, like a blow. "I want; I cannot have; I still want, with all my being": that is Graham's beauty, and the back fall instantaneously sums it up.

Yet even for a trained Graham student, the back fall on one count takes years to master. So I'll suggest something simpler.

Try this. Stand back from a mirror and lift one arm directly before you, your downward-facing palm about two feet above your waist. You've performed an action. Now you're going to make it a gesture. If you lock your elbow and stiffen your fingers, you'll have a salute. But salutes aren't beautiful in the way I want you to experience "beautiful"; they are merely functional. They fit the body into a prescribed form. I'm hoping, instead, that you will find the form within your body. Relax your arm, and perform the original action again. This time imagine that you're going after something that, for one reason or an-

other, you can't possess by stepping forward. You're shopping, and you see just the thing hung high in a window display, price tag dangling seductively. You know the right answer, but you're planted in the back of the classroom and the teacher is paying attention only to the front row. You're in bed, propped on one elbow, your words hanging in the dark air, as someone you're crazy about slides away, perhaps irrevocably. To the tips of your fingers you *want*. Yet remember to keep your shoulder down too: that will give you the strength to seize your goal, if you're lucky enough to reach it, or, if you're unlucky, help you to keep your balance.

Now for your head. Your arm wants; your head aspires. Look along your raised arm to your wristbone. Then, spotting it, carefully raise your face until your eyes focus on a point one foot directly above your wrist. If you do this fully, lifting your face rather than your eyes alone, you should feel the gesture you're making. The feeling is of both heightened effort and heightened openness. You may also feel vulnerable. If you aren't a dancer, you'll be vulnerable to your own self-mockery; if you were an animal, you'd be vulnerable because you are exposing your throat. And because you are lifting your face despite your vulnerability, you are going to look more open, younger. Furthermore, the distance between what you reach for and what you aspire to—between your fingertips and your focus—will make the thing you want loom larger; the length gives your desire dimension. This is not, in itself, a difficult assignment, but an untrained dancer, sneaking a glimpse of himself or herself in the mirror, might break up in a laugh, like an amateur vocalist listening to a tape of himself singing in the shower. My aim is not to make you beautiful but to remind you of the dynamism within that which we call longing, whether for love, truth, freedom, sanity, harmony, justice, well-being, joy—the dynamism on which, I believe, beauty in art depends.

The gesture you have just practiced comes from the Balanchine repertory. One can find it in ballets from every decade. It is most obvious in *Serenade* and the other romantic fantasias, but when one's attention is called to it in the purely classical works—the tutu ballets that supposedly show Balanchine at his coolest and most reserved—one realizes how much more there was to this choreographer than elegance.

This past spring I attended a rehearsal of one such work, *Symphonie Concertante*, conducted by the guest teacher Maria Tallchief at the School of American Ballet, whose students were preparing to perform the ballet at the New York State Theater during the New York City Ballet's Balanchine Celebration. No individual holds the key to George Balanchine; every dancer he worked with has a piece of the secret, and sometimes those pieces make for disagreements. But Tallchief, one of his most important ballerinas of the late 1940s and the 1950s—she was one of *Symphonie Concertante*'s two original ballerinas—carries a big, impressive section of that secret in her

memory, and when she speaks, one listens hard. It was from Tallchief that I learned about Balanchine's direction to the original cast to look one foot above the wrist in the first arabesque position—to lift the face, and thereby animate the pose. She also spoke of how a dancer should think not of standing in place but rather of peering into the distance while momentarily at rest, "as if looking over a balustrade into the lake"—thereby lifting the diaphragm and giving the stationary moment a sense of movement, even though the body is not visibly moving. "Don't say no," Tallchief remarked at one point. "As Mr. B. used to tell us, lift your cheek to be kissed, and say yes." What the dancer thinks and imagines is part of the dance.

These tiny points about the mind at play help to turn generic ballet behavior into living Balanchine style. They are objective criteria, as measurable in effect as turnout from the hip, the very basis of classical dancing. Once the dancers began to absorb the instructions in their bodies, *Symphonie Concertante*—a Swiss watch of a ballet, with a cast of twenty-five, to a Mozart score—began to keep time as simply as an hourglass. Once the dancers' technical strength and the choreography's intricacy were quickened by touches of aspiration and longing, the whole confection perceptibly lightened. "You are beautiful!" Tallchief exclaimed at one point. At that rehearsal *Symphonie Concertante* flourished.

AN OBSERVER REMOVED FROM THE REHEARSAL PROCESS, however, takes away a complex lesson too. The beauty of *Symphonie Concertante* will not persist as a cut flower. It must be nourished daily by the dancers' own desire to be more—more lengthened out, more musically precise, more willing to take risks, more determined not to settle for the sort of "perfection" that reduces to mere congruence between the lines of their bodies and static mental images. In the midst of what is surely among the most decorous and understated ballets that Balanchine ever made, they must find a way to be hungry, to crave. To remain a perennial, the ballet must be steeped in some kind of psychic soil. Without that subterranean aspect the beauty of *Symphonie Concertante* is no more than elegance.

And perhaps beneath this complex lesson is another, simpler moral: that whatever one considers to be the ideal of beauty—Gombrich's grand harmony; or Weinberg's grand unified theory, embodied by a machine we may not be able to afford; or the grand illusion of harmony composed of sweat and striving, suggested by the rehearsal—the origin is the same. One of Balanchine's compatriots, Boris Pasternak, identified it first. You may know the sentence I'm thinking of. My younger self—who used to pin up literary maxims by her desk—plucked it from *Doctor Zhivago*. Her pinup disappeared long ago, yet its message is graven on my brain. Scrawled on a scrap of foolscap, by an impatient hand, it read, "The root of beauty is audacity." □

A Short Story



Charity

by Joy Williams

IT ALL BEGAN WITH THE ENTHUSIASM OF A POLICE officer, no less, who was eating a tamale-and-egg burrito at a café near the Arizona–New Mexico border. “I just went out there in all that white sand and got me a dune and went up on it and looked and looked and just let it sink in, and I never saw anything like it, never felt anything like it. I think I could stay out there in that white sand for a real long time, and I don’t know exactly why.”

“It doesn’t sound like something you’d want to do too often,” Richard said. He smiled, but the policeman looked at him and frowned. Then he ignored them.

Back in the car, Janice wanted to go to the white sand immediately. They were having a look at the Southwest, on their way to Santa Fe. They were both wearing khaki suits, and Richard had around his neck a hand-painted tie for which he had paid a great deal of money in Tucson.

They drove to the White Sands National Monument, paid the admission, and went in. The park ranger said, “We invite you to get out of your car and explore a bit, climb a dune for a better view of the endless sea of sand all around you.”

They drove slowly along a loop road. Everything was white and orderly. It was as if the dunes had a sense of mission. Here and there people were fervently throwing themselves down them and laughing.

“Do you want to get out?” Richard said. “I’ll wait in the car.”

Janice felt that she was still capable of awe and transfiguration and was uncomfortable when, together with Richard, she didn’t feel much of anything. She was too aware of the fact that they were on a loop road. She studied the dunes without hope. As they were leaving, they saw something small and translucent, like a lizard, stagger beneath their wheels, and they both remarked on that.

They began quarreling, without much vigor, almost immediately.

“I don’t know what that policeman was talking about,” Richard said.

“He was trying to express something spiritual,” Janice said.

“Don’t you get tired of that out here? Everything’s sacred and mysterious. Even the cops are after illumination. It wears me out, to tell you the truth.”

She wished she had gotten out of the car. She hadn’t even gotten out of the car. She was wearing high heels. “Let’s go back,” she said. “Let’s try it again.”

“Janice,” Richard said.

After some miles he said, “I forgot to take a leak back there.”

“Really!” she exclaimed.

“I’m going to pull into this rest stop.”

“To take a leak! That’s fascinating!” She fixed an enthralled expression upon him.

Outside, the heat was breathtaking and the desert had a slightly lavender cast. Some people sat at a picnic table under a ramada speaking happily about family members who smoked like chimneys and lived into their nineties. Farther away someone was calling to a small white dog. “Peaches,” she called, “you come here this instant!” The dog seemed sincerely unfamiliar with the name Peaches. Peaches was clearly a name that the dog felt did not indicate its true nature, and it was not going to respond.

The rest-stop road led past the toilets, through a portion of landscape where every form of plant life was explained with signs, and then back onto the highway. Janice walked toward a group of vending machines. She loved vending-machine coffee. She felt it had a very unusual taste and wasn’t for everyone.

While she waited for the cardboard cup to sling itself down and fill with the uncanny liquid, she noticed a chalky purple van parked nearby. Two beautiful children stood beside it with their arms folded, looking around them as though they had a certain amount of authority. They were rather dirty-looking and thin and

Janice felt lovely with social responsibility. She was a more giving and carefree person than Richard, her husband, she thought gratefully, and that’s why she could move so freely through the world

blond and striking. The boy was around seven, Janice thought, the girl maybe eleven. Or eight and twelve? She didn't know much about children. A man and a woman were rummaging around inside the open van. Both the man and the boy were barefoot and shirtless. The woman, who had long, graying, careless hair, said something to the girl, who climbed inside just as the man triumphantly produced what appeared to be an empty pizza box. Janice watched them; she could hardly take her eyes off them. She finished the coffee, which had cooled quickly and was even more peculiar than usual, and walked back to the car, where Richard was standing. It was a rental with a scratch along one side, something she had taken great pains to point out to the agency so that she and Richard would not be held responsible for it. The grille had collected a number of butterflies. Without speaking she got in and shut the door. She would like to tell Richard how much she refrained from saying to him, but actually there was very little she refrained from saying. Nevertheless, she distrusted speech as a way of expressing thoughts.

They had become involved with a flurry of activity at the rest stop and found themselves in a line of cars winding slowly toward the exit. As they passed the van, the man raised the scrap of box, on which was now printed, in crayon, PLEASE: NEED GAS MONEY. The colon in the plea touched Janice deeply.

"Richard," she said, "we must give that family some money."

The line of cars pushed past the man, who now held the sign close to his chest, just above an appendectomy scar. The children looked stonily into space.

"Richard!" she said.

"Oh, please, Janice," he said. "Honestly."

"Go back," she said.

They had reached the highway. Richard lurched around the other cars and accelerated. "Why do you always want to go back? We're not going back. Why don't you do things the first time?"

She protested the unfairness of this with a short scream. She wanted to hammer out the windshield with her high-heeled shoes. "I want to turn back and give that poor family some gas money," she said.

"Someone will give them money," he said.

"But I want it to be us!" She wanted to be generous. She felt something like fear, she thought. She was afraid. Being generous would make her less afraid. But that would be selfish, she thought.

Richard drove faster.

"Look," she said reasonably, "you drink a lot, Richard, you know you do, and what if you were in the hospital and you needed a new liver and the doctor finally came in and said, 'I have good news: the hospital has found a liver for you'? Wouldn't you be grateful?"

"I would," Richard said, thoughtfully.

"Someone would have given you a second chance."

"It would be a dead person," Richard said, still thoughtful. "It would have to have been."

"I wish I were driving," she said.

"Well, you're not."

Janice moaned. "I hate you," she said.

"Let's just get to Santa Fe," Richard said. "It's a civilized town. It will have a civilizing effect on us."

"That tie makes you look stupid," she said.

"I know," he said. He wrenched the knot free, rolled down the window, and threw the tie out.

"What are you doing?" Janice cried. The tie was of genuine cellulose acetate and had been painted in the forties. It depicted a Plains Indian brave standing before a pueblo. That the scene was incorrect, that it had been conceived in utter ignorance, made it more expensive and, they were told, more valuable in the long run. But now there was no long run. It was gone. She looked behind her and then turned in her seat and stared breathlessly into the distance ahead. She thought of the little family gravely, with compassion.

"I'm afraid I have to stop again. For gas," he said.

He was pitiless, she thought. A moral aborigine. She hugged herself.

They rolled off an exit into a town that stretched a single block deep for miles beside the highway, and pulled into a gas station that was mocked up to look like a trading post, with a corral beside it filled with old, big-finned cars. Richard got out and pumped gas. Then he cleaned the windshield, grinning in at her.

She did not know him, she thought. She was really no more acquainted with who he was than she was familiar with, say, the cold dark matter theory of the origin of the universe.

He tapped on the glass. "Want to go inside?" he said. "Shot glasses, velvet paintings, lacquered scorpions?"

He was a snob, she thought.

He sighed and walked away, patting the breast pocket of his jacket for his wallet. Janice moved across the seat quickly, grasped the wheel, started the engine, and drove off in a great rattle and shriek of sand. She was back at the rest stop in fifteen minutes. The children had climbed the van's ladder and were lying on the roof, as still as corpses. The woman was nowhere visible. The man was still holding the sign. Janice pulled up beside him.

"How you doing?" he said. He had very bright, pale eyes.

"I want to give you twenty dollars," Janice said. She opened her purse and was disturbed to find she had a ten and three fifties.

"Rose!" the man yelled, lowering the sign. He had a long, very smooth torso except for the appendectomy scar. The woman emerged from the van and regarded Janice coolly.

"Yes?" she said.

"I saw your sign," Janice said, confused.

The children rose languidly from the roof and looked down at her.

"We have to travel seventy miles to our home and get these children in school tomorrow," Rose said, formally. "What we do, what our policy is, is we drive to the nearest gas station and at that point you give us the amount you've decided upon. That way you'll be assured that we're using it for gas and gas only."

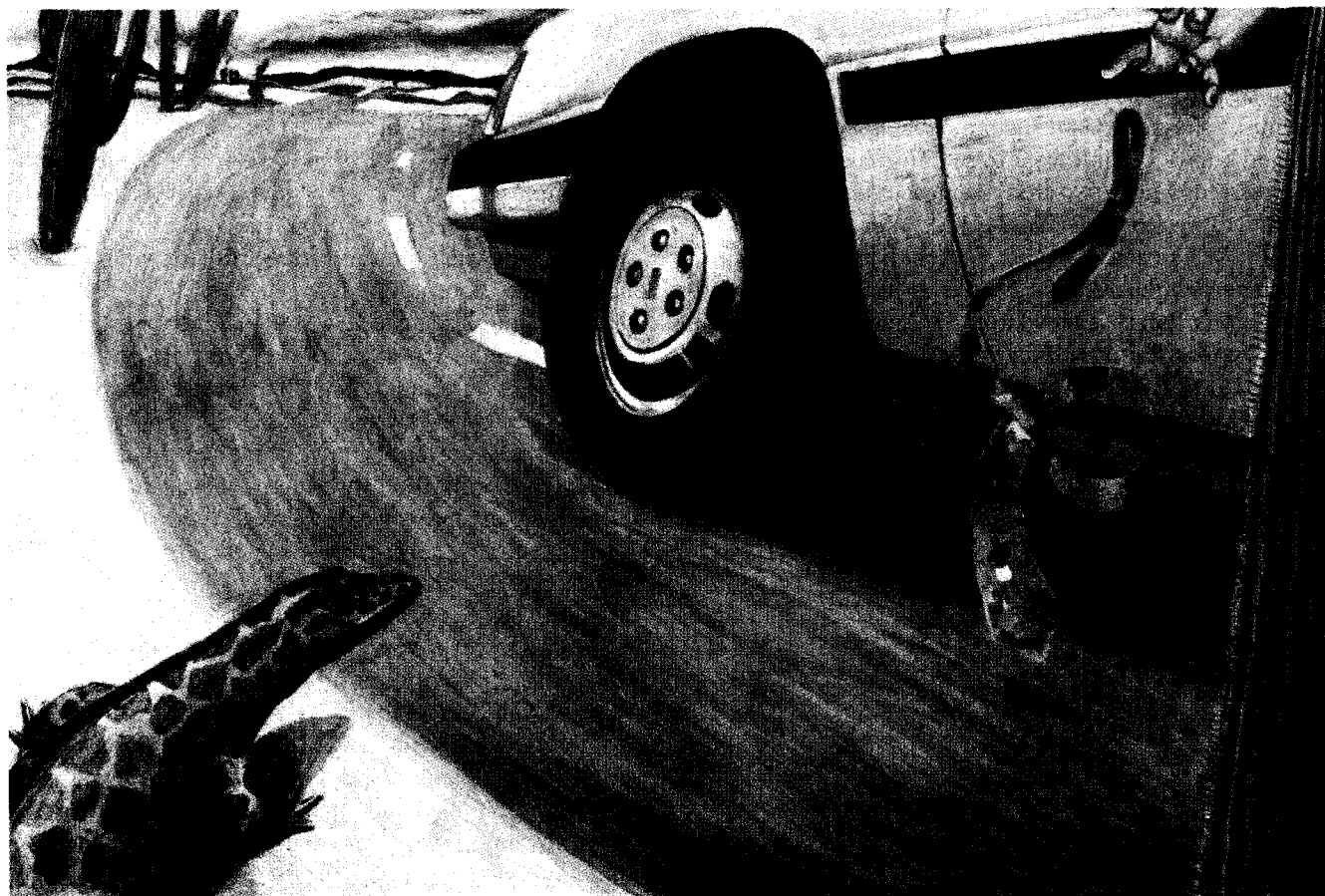
Janice was grateful for the rules they had worked out. She would be able to change a fifty-dollar bill.

tle stupidly. She suggested that they drive to the gas station so that they could all be on their way.

"Can I ride with you?" Rose asked. "I would like to feel like a human being, if only for a few miles."

"Lemme too!" Zorro cried. He opened the back door of Janice's car, tumbled over the front seat, and snuggled against her. "Mmmm, you smell fine," he said.

"I don't know where he picks that shit up from," Rose muttered. "Certainly not from his father. Get out of that vehicle now!" she screamed.



"People will give you money at a rest stop, whereas they wouldn't at a gas station," the man said. "It's just human nature. They're more at peace with themselves in rest stops."

Introductions were made. The man's name was Leo. The children were Zorro and Zoebella. Janice identified herself too.

"Skinny Puppy's my gang name," Zorro said, "but use it at your peril."

"Gang name my ass," Leo said. "He doesn't know anything about gangs. He signed a low rider last week, practically got us killed."

"I didn't know I was signing," Zorro said. "I just had my hand out the window."

"The bastard about ran us off the highway," Leo said indignantly.

Janice found that she was gazing at them openly, a lit-

The child flipped backward over the seat and out the door. He jumped into the van. Zoebella, who had not uttered a word, climbed in beside him.

A GREEABLY, JANICE INVITED ROSE TO RIDE with her to the gas station. She felt lovely with social responsibility. She was doing well, it would be over soon, and she would be able to look back on this in the future. She was a more giving and carefree person than Richard, she thought gratefully, and that's why she could move so freely through the world.

Leo started the van with difficulty. Blue smoke poured from the tailpipe.

"That doesn't look good," Janice said.

"Rings, seals, valves, you name it," Rose said.

The van gained the highway and wobbled off ahead of them. Smoke appeared to be rising from its wheels as well. The sky was cloudless and sharply blue and the smoke floundered upward into it.

"Some people like the sky out here," Rose said, "but I prefer the sky over New York City. Now, that's sky. The big buildings push it back so it's way, way overhead. It looks wilder that way."

Janice nodded, thinking that this was a highly original remark. She felt splendid about herself. She looked at Rose warmly.

"That Zorro smudged your seat," Rose said, looking at a small dusty footprint on the car's upholstery.

Janice waved such a concern away. "Such beautiful children," she said. "And such unusual names."

"God knows I didn't want to call him Zorro, but his father insisted. Those two aren't from the same stock. Zoebella's dad was a blind fellow named Wilbur. I hope that you aren't, like many others, under the misperception that blind people are good people. It just isn't so. Blind people don't feel that they have to interact with others at all. They contribute nothing to a conversation. We had a wonderful dog, though, named Mountain. Mountain came to Lamaze class with us. Lamaze encourages you to focus on something other than birth, and I focused on

Mountain week after week, but when it was finally time to have Zoebella, they wouldn't let Mountain into the delivery room. A violation of infection-control procedures, they said. Well, I freaked, and I think the whole thing messed Zoebella up too. Here I went the whole pregnancy with no cigarettes, no liquor, and then they won't let me have the dog in the delivery room! It was a very, very difficult birth, and Wilbur was no help at all, but we sued the hospital for not letting us have Mountain in there and they settled out of court. Wilbur was long gone by then, but that money did us for four years, Leo and Zorro too. What an inspiration that was. I wish I could come up with another one that good. Have you ever had sex with a blind man?"

"Why, no," Janice said. "No, I haven't."

"Do it before you die, girl," Rose said. "There's nothing like it."

Janice nodded. She felt a little nervous.

"But don't stick around afterward. Get your cookies out of there," Rose advised.

Janice nodded again. She was beginning to worry about Richard's mood when she retrieved him. The van weaved, smoldering, before them. Janice felt a little queasy watching it. By the time they reached the exit, Janice was gripping the steering wheel tightly. It was actually damp. The van turned, not into the gas station where Janice had left Richard but into one across the street, where it clattered to a stop.

"Makes you want a cocktail just looking at that heap, doesn't it?" Rose said.

"I'd like to give you fifty dollars, if you don't mind," Janice said. "I think you probably need some oil, too. Wouldn't you like some oil?"

"Oh, you could drop a bundle into that thing," Rose said. "It's a suckhole." She accepted the bill slowly from Janice's fingers. "Thank you," she said. She seemed absorbed in some involuted ritual. She didn't respect the money, but she respected the person who gave her the money, Janice thought. Was that it? Why was she giving Rose so much money anyway? Her own behavior was becoming somewhat suspect, she thought.

Rose got out of the car, stretched, and ambled toward her family. Janice drove across the street. The trading post was locked tight. Four spotted dogs with heads the size of buckets regarded her avidly from the car corral.

"Richard," she called. The dogs went into high uproar, mad with joy. They raced around the enclosure, baying with the thrill of duty and upsetting their water dishes. Janice drove slowly in circles in the area of the trading post, and then pulled out into the street and drove slowly to the end of town. The town simply stopped at an enormous statue of a road runner, beyond which was thousands of acres of grazing land with nothing grazing on it. Richard was a wily and annoying adversary, Janice thought. She drove back through the town, honking her horn frequently. Not only was Richard wily and annoying

HAIRCUT

"Quit sniveling! Sit still!" And in disgust he palmed my head like a basketball and forced it down and buzzed the clippers up my neck again. Hair sifted down my collar. I squirmed. He jerked the pink bath towel tighter against my throat, and hair flew up and landed in the sugar bowl. Then gradually, to even out mistakes, my hair grew shorter, more like stubble, more like West Point or hot Fort Hood, where I was born. We saved some money. But now it's his turn and he sits, hands folded on his lap, unsteady, while I, with tiny scissors, snip the gray hair curling from his nostrils and from both ears; and, Jesus, at sixty, the death-hairs really get their growth, don't they? The scissors pinch his skin and he tries not to flinch. "Sit still!" I snarl, and I'm so horrified I say it one more time, "Sit still."

—Andrew Hudgins

but he could be actually hazardous. His behavior was hazardous, she thought. She circled the pumps of the deserted trading post again. The big-headed dogs were lying on their stomachs, sharing what appeared to be a large, eviscerated jackrabbit. She drove across the street. She needed an aspirin. Rose and the children were sitting on the ground on a single fitted bedsheet. The van was on a lift inside the garage.

"Are you looking for someone?" Rose asked.

"No," Janice said. "I don't look as though I am, do I?"

"You look hungry, then, or something," Rose said.

"I'm hungry," Zorro said. "Jesus, I am."

"Are those horse?" Zoebella said, pointing at Janice's shoes.

Janice was startled to hear Zoebella's voice. It was soft and solemn. "What?" she said.

"Your shoes, are they horse?"

"I don't know. They're leather of some sort. That would be awful, I guess, if they were, wouldn't it?"

"You seem uncertain," Zoebella said quietly.

Leo came up to them, wiping his greasy hands on his pants. Stripes of grease ran down his chest and he had oil in his hair. "We got a little problem here, but it can be fixed," he said. "Man here's going to let me use his tools." He looked at Janice. "Why don't you women and children get something to eat," he said expansively. "Sit in a nice air-conditioned restaurant and get something nice to eat."

Rose was particular about the restaurant. She wanted it dark, with booths, no salad bar, no view of the outside. They got into Janice's car and drove up the street again. Zorro was sent into several establishments to determine their suitability. He had put on a T-shirt that said BAN LEG-HOLD TRAPS and showed a number of birds and animals, crippled and quite conceivably dead, colorfully arranged around a frightful black iron trap.

"He loves that shirt, but I don't think he gets it," Rose confided to Janice.

"You should bury that shirt, with Zorro in it," Zoebella said quietly.

Janice continued to scan the street for Richard. She saw no one who even remotely resembled him—not that she would have settled for that, she realized.

"You sure you're not looking for someone?" Rose asked.

"Not at all," Janice said. "I'm just trying to be aware—you know, aware of my surroundings?"

"You can't be too careful," Rose agreed. "Tell me, if you were attacked, which would you feel more comfortable doing, shooting the individual or gouging out his eyes with the car keys?"

Zoebella leaned over the front seat and said softly, "I think that policeman behind us wants you to pull over."

"Yes!" Zorro said. "There go the misery lights!"

Janice was told by the officer that she had drifted through a STOP sign. He looked remarkably like the same man Richard had offended at breakfast. While he was

writing out the ticket, Rose asked him which eating establishment he would recommend, and he recommended the one they were parked in front of.

The traffic ticket was for a hundred dollars, which Janice considered high. However, if she paid him fifty dollars then and there, he said, he would consider the matter closed.

"If you got money, you save money," Rose said.

Janice gave the policeman fifty dollars and received his signature on a piece of paper, as though she had asked him for his autograph. After he left, Rose urged her to come into the restaurant.

"This kind of event calls for a cocktail," Rose said. "It always does."

Inside, Janice felt disoriented. The interior of the restaurant was dark and very cold. The cold smelled somewhat like meat. Zoebella placed her small hand in Janice's and led her to a booth. They sat holding hands opposite Zorro, whose T-shirt glowed prominently in the darkness. Janice ordered a double gin with ice and Rose specified a bottled beer; then she ordered the turkey plate for everyone.

"Turkey plate's always the best," she said.

Zoebella did not release Janice's hand even after the food arrived. The children ate as though starved. Their plates were emptied in no time.

"Do you believe in God?" Zoebella murmured.

Janice was trying to locate a hair that had found its way onto her tongue.

Rose said, "When I was Zoebella's age, every time I thought of God I saw him as something in a skimpy black bathing suit and I saw myself sitting on his lap, but this perception was drummed out of me. Just drummed out. Now whenever the name comes up, I don't think anything."

"I think of God as a magician," Zoebella whispered, looking closely at Janice. "A rich magician who has a great many sheep who he hypnotizes so he won't have to pay for shepherds or fences to keep them from running away. First he hypnotizes them into thinking that he is their good master who loves them. Then he hypnotizes them into thinking that they're not sheep at all. After this they never run away but quietly wait until the magician decides he needs them and kills them."

Zoebella's skin was very pale, almost a shade of blue, and her eyes were large and blue. "Goodness," Janice said, perturbed. Only a piece of bread was going to find this hair, she decided. She pushed one into her mouth.

Zorro said, "I think of God . . ." His mother yanked his arm sharply. "We don't want to hear that again," she said.

Zorro collected everyone's forks and put them in the pocket of his shorts. "We always need forks," Rose explained to Janice. "I don't know what happens to them at our house."

The children ordered large butterscotch sundaes and polished them off within a few minutes. Zoebella ate del-

icately but with lightning speed. She had released Janice's hand to better wield the long spoon, but when she finished she tucked her hand in Janice's once again.

"I hope I'm at school tomorrow," she said in her almost inaudible voice. "If I'm not at school tomorrow, I don't know what I'll do." She arranged her face in an expression of horror.

Janice couldn't imagine a child like Zoebella thriving at school, but she squeezed the child's sticky hand. The magician-and-the-sheep business had caused her to feel a little unwell and considerably undirected, but now she knew what she would do. She would take Rose and the children to their home. She was sure that the situation with Leo and the van had not improved, and she was eager to finish what she had begun. Otherwise, in what way would she be able to think about it? She wouldn't be able to think about it. They lived in a little town called Claunch. It was not exactly on the way to Santa Fe, but she could still make Santa Fe before dark if they left immediately. Richard had made reservations at a hotel there. A message might be waiting, or even Richard himself. If not, if he wasn't, then when she arrived, she would be the message. One's life, after all, is the message, isn't it—the way one lives one's life, the good one carries out?

"I can see you're thinking," Zoebella said in a quiet, disappointed voice.

BACK AT THE GARAGE LEO WAS AGREEABLE TO Janice's idea. "I believe I'm going to be here for days," he said. He kissed the children and shook Janice's hand. In the car again, with directions for Claunch, Janice remarked that Leo seemed like a good man.

Rose looked at her and widened her eyes. "He's all right," she said. "Whenever he gets drunk, he threatens to kill the kids' rabbits, but he hasn't done it yet."

They drove in silence for a while. When they got to the family's home, Janice was not going to go inside. She would be invited, but under no circumstances would she go inside. She didn't want to go so far as to go into it even in her thoughts. She would leave them at their threshold and be gone.

"What's your credit card look like?" Zorro asked. "Is it black with a mountain on it and an eagle and a big orange sun?"

"I couldn't have left it at the restaurant," Janice said. "I couldn't have."

"Right by the cash register. I saw it when I got tooth-picks."

"Zorro sees credit cards everywhere," Rose said. "I've told him never, never pick them up. He's got a shrewd eye, and I want him to have a shrewd eye, but my feeling is that he could go from shrewd to dishonest real quick."

After a while Janice said, "I'm not going back."

No one contested this. They were not on the highway

but on a narrow blacktop road, streaking through the desert. Janice had an increasing sense of urgency about reaching Claunch, but she slowed appropriately as they came to the outskirts of a small town. She saw a few scattered adobes, framed by enormous prickly-pear cactus, their red fruits glowing in the late-afternoon light. A man was riding a horse bareback down the road.

"There is a horse," Zoebella said reverently.

They passed through the town, and Janice was accelerating again when Zorro saw a snake on the rim of the asphalt.

"Lookitit!" he screamed. "Lookit how big! You just can't pass him by!" He grabbed the wheel and turned it toward the snake. Janice wrenched it back and slammed on the brakes. The car shot off the road, not quite clearing a stony wash, and with a snapping of axles crumpled against a desert of wildflowers—primrose and sand ver-bena and, as Zoebella pointed out quietly later, sacred datura, a plant of which every part was poisonous.

"Is everyone all right?" Rose said. "All in one piece? That's the important thing—nothing else is important."

"I just wanted that snake so bad," Zorro said.

"He's always after his dad to hit things for him," Rose said. "You're in somebody else's vehicle, Zorro! You are a guest in another person's car!"

They got out of the car slowly and looked at it. It was clearly a total wreck. It would never ride the road again. That they had survived was remarkable.

Zoebella touched Janice's hand. "I'm glad you didn't run over the snake," she whispered.

"I have a terrible headache," Janice said.

"You bumped your head pretty bad," Rose agreed. "I saw a motel back there. Why don't we get a room and declare this day over? You can lie down and rest. Do you have any bath crystals in your luggage? You could take a nice soothing bath."

"I could use the bubbles after you were finished," Zoebella said. "Not new bubbles but the same bubbles."

But they couldn't get to Janice's luggage. The luggage was in the trunk and the trunk was crushed. Janice didn't have bath crystals anyway.

"I don't have bath crystals," she said. Her voice was entirely unsteady.

"It's all right," Zoebella said. She now had both of Janice's hands in hers. "You mustn't regret that."

They stumbled up the incline to the road. The car, where it lay, was scarcely visible. It appeared merely as a large gum-colored wad of something.

ONLY ONE ROOM WAS AVAILABLE AT THE motel. It had a lone large bed that pretty much filled it. The other rooms were unoccupied, but each possessed a unique incapacity that made it unfit for occupancy—a clogged drain, a charred carpet, a cracked toilet, a splintered door. Fleas. The Indian girl in the office was reluctant to give Janice

change for the fifty-dollar bill she presented until the morning, when the owner could examine it.

Zorro entered the room first, soared to the bed, and began bouncing on it.

"Skinny Puppy enters the ring!" he shouted. He crouched and weaved, jabbing the air. Rose swatted him away.

"You lie down," she said to Janice. "I'll take the kids over to the café so you can rest. They've got cocktails, I noticed. Do you want me to bring you back a cocktail?"

utterly blank. Then she began to recall Emily Dickinson's poems. She had once known a great many of the poems and for some reason had been fond of reciting them. She knew what she liked to think of as Emily Dickinson's last words: "I must go in, Memory's fog is rising." Janice felt it was unlikely, highly unlikely, that these were her actual last words. She felt this for the first time. She pushed Emily Dickinson from her mind. Richard tried to get into her mind, but he just . . . couldn't. *Richard*, she thought, without much conviction.



"I want pie," Zorro said. "I'm ready for a piece of pie."

"I think I'll just lie down," Janice said.

"Don't do anything until after you've rested a bit," Rose said.

"Don't look in the mirror or anything," Zoebella urged her softly.

"You look white as a sheet," Rose said. "Maybe we should stay with you just until you get your color back."

"I don't feel at all well," Janice said. She crept across the bed and lay on her back. She didn't want to close her eyes.

"Scootch over just a little bit," Rose said. "More to the middle, so we can all fit."

They all lay on the bed. After a few moments someone began to snore. Janice didn't think it was she, but she wouldn't want to bet her life on it. She didn't know what she was going to do. Nothing came to her. Her mind was

She lay quietly. Finally she imagined herself getting up and leaving. She imagined herself slipping away from Rose and Zorro and Zoebella, silently opening the door.

She would go to the highway and stand beside it with her arm raised. Cars and trucks would come toward her. Some, when they saw her, would put their lights on for the night. It was that moment of the day when people made these adjustments, these decisions. She imagined herself standing there with her arm raised as it got darker, as it became utterly dark. She imagined herself thinking, out there, alone, at the mercy of people who were blind to her, that this wasn't a good idea. Though it hardly mattered, as she couldn't imagine someone actually stopping anyway . . . She wouldn't stop for a person in her situation. People with nothing to lose just had it written all over them. □



Unfairly Convicted

A current Broadway show has it wrong about Jelly Roll Morton

by William H. Youngren

AFTER DECADES of undeserved obscurity, the great New Orleans pianist, composer, and band-leader Ferdinand "Jelly Roll" Morton is suddenly in the public eye. The occasion is the hit Broadway musical *Jelly's Last Jam*, in which Morton is portrayed by the brilliant and engaging actor and dancer Gregory Hines, who has been awarded a Tony for his performance.

The show takes the form of an inquisition. Morton has died, but his entry into heaven is blocked by a black-garbed figure called the Chimney Man. Unlike such successful candidates for eternal bliss as Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Buddy Bolden, and Sidney Bechet, Morton has betrayed his people, his art, and himself by denying his blackness and the black roots of his music. He has lived a lie, boasting that he alone created jazz,

rather than acknowledging that it came out of Africa and the sufferings of black people everywhere. Shunning other blacks as inferiors, he has attempted to pass himself off as a Creole whose heritage is not African and black but European (specifically, French) and white. In the course of the show he is made to mouth such lines as "No coon stock in this Creole" and "Ain't no black notes in my song," and to humiliate his friends and associates by calling them niggers: "The only thing a nigga can do for me is scrub my steps n' shine my shoes." This Jelly Roll Morton is, in the accusatory words of the Chimney Man, "He who drinks from the vine of syncopation / But denies the black soil from which this rhythm was born."

Gradually the inquisition turns into a kind of mass group-therapy session

in which Morton is forced to relive his life as it really was—all the while protesting, with a shrug and a wink at the audience, "This never happened." Along the way there is a good deal of talk about how the failure to face up to one's early pain renders one incapable of love, and so on. But finally, to everybody's immense relief, Morton does indeed face up. Confronted by the ghostly figures from his past, he confesses,

I was wrong

Creole boy once, way back when,
Had the whole world singin'
Had this sound in him, hey!
A pain too heavy to say
A pain he started to play
Inside every note of his
Is what he came from . . . who he is

To which the ghostly presences affirmingly reply,

We are the rhythms
That color your song . . .

We are the pain that makes the
Melody strong . . .

We are the feeling
We are the feeling in your song

And so Jelly Roll Morton passes into heaven along with Armstrong, Ellington, and the rest. But this fictional Morton was right to insist "This never happened"—he should have stuck to his guns.

IN THE SPRING of 1938 the folk-song researcher Alan Lomax invited the real Jelly Roll Morton to come to the Library of Congress's Coolidge Auditorium and record his music and his reminiscences about the early days of jazz. The result was almost seven hours of matchless piano playing and storytelling. One of the first things Lomax did was to ask Morton about his background. As slow, dark, thoughtful chords arose from the piano, Lomax spoke: "Jelly Roll, tell us about yourself. Tell us where you were born and who your folks were—when, how." And Morton, continuing to chord, replied: "Well, I'll tell you. As I can understand, my folks were in the city of New Orleans long before the Louisiana Purchase. And all my folks came directly from the shores—not the shores: I mean from France. That is: across the world, in the other world. And they landed here in a new world, years ago."

It is one of the great moments in the

history of the phonograph. You feel as though you were listening to Homer, rather than to a forty-eight-year-old jazz musician down on his luck. After describing his great-grandparents, Emile and Mimi Peché, Morton remarks: "As long as I can remember those folks, they never was able to speak a word in American, or English." And as he continues to trace his lineage, he lays great stress on his French ancestry. Here, then, is the germ of the accusation leveled against Morton in *Jelly's Last Jam*: he tried to deny his blackness by passing himself off as a white musician with a white musician's heritage.

Indeed, Lomax himself, in his 1950 book *Mister Jelly Roll*, which was based on the Library of Congress recordings and on subsequent research among other musicians and Morton family members, charged that "Jelly Roll's whole life was constructed around his denial of his Negro status." But the key word here is "status": Morton may indeed have been something of a snob, but he was no racist. The basis of his snobbery was class, not race. Morton was what used to be called a "Creole of color," and he quite rightly believed that his background had exposed him to social and musical influences to which most New Orleans blacks did not have access. He never tried to pass himself off as white, nor could he possibly have done so. His early years were spent on the black vaudeville circuit, and later, when he became famous, he always worked with black musicians. He seemed to prefer working with Creole musicians, like the clarinetists Omer Simeon and George Baquet, but that was because they were likely to have had better musical training. Anyhow, some of his best records were made with musicians like the clarinetist Johnny Dodds and the drummer Baby Dodds, who were dark-skinned uptown blacks rather than light-skinned downtown Creoles.

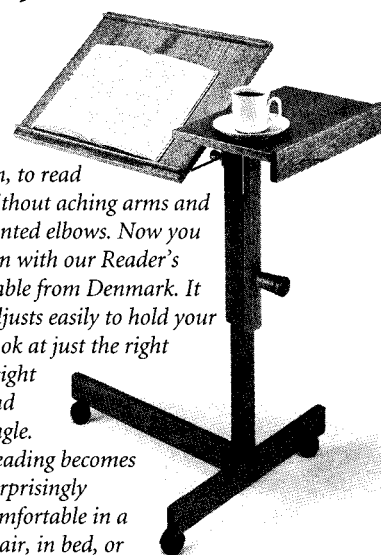
We live in a time that is obsessed with race but that attempts to deny the very existence of class and class distinctions. In Morton's time racial boundaries were firmly established and firmly enforced; but people thought a great deal about class. It probably never occurred to Morton to deny that he was black. He felt that his musical abilities and the special richness of his musical background entitled him to more

attention and better treatment than most black musicians received from the educated, cultured white world. The range of music to which Morton was exposed as a young man included classical "highlights" heard in New Orleans's French Opera House, genteel turn-of-the-century salon pieces, ordinary pop songs by his friend Tony Jackson and similar composers, ragtime, the hard-driving stomps and languorous blues of the tough Storyville honky-tonks, and the Caribbean rhythms he liked to refer to as "the Spanish tinge." All this and more can be heard in Morton's compositions, most of which he recorded either as a solo pianist or with his various pickup bands. But you will hear virtually none of it in *Jelly's Last Jam*.

In 1985, when the show was still in the planning stages, the superb traditional jazz pianist Butch Thompson, perhaps best known for his appearances on Garrison Keillor's *A Prairie Home Companion*, was called in as a musical consultant. He played many of Morton's solo piano pieces for the show's writers and producers, and also many of Morton's band records. He even took George C. Wolfe, who wrote the script and directed *Jelly's Last Jam*, to New Orleans and introduced him to William Russell, until his death the dean of New Orleans jazz authorities. But soon the show began taking what Thompson recently told me was a "political direction." Faced with Morton's actual music, Wolfe and the others began implying that it didn't sound black enough, that it didn't have the strong emotional content of gospel music or blues. Toward the end of 1989 Thompson sensed that he was being eased out—though by that time he no longer cared. What was needed, he was told, was someone who could "theatricalize" Morton's music, make it suitable for the Broadway of the 1990s.

And so Luther Henderson, a composer and arranger who had worked on more than fifty Broadway shows, was hired. In *The New York Times* of June 30, 1992, Henderson described his job as "the deconstruction of the music to discover its basic anatomy, and the subsequent reconstruction and re-development of the music to meet these demands, as well as to preserve the essence of the jazz from which it is sprung." Henderson had perhaps picked up the chic literary term "de-

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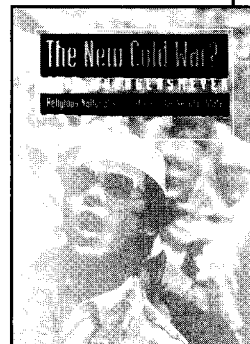
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construction" from Wolfe, who had told the *Times* in an interview published the preceding April 19 that "when you first hear it," much of Morton's music is "just joy"—which obviously won't do if what you're looking for is pain. Wolfe continued:

But if you slow it down or strip it down, you find infinitely more complex emotions. If you deconstruct the tune, you can then choose the emotion, maybe in the tune, or in the under score, or the melody, or the riffs. Once you get inside of it, you realize how incredibly theatrical it is.

It is thus no surprise that virtually all the music in *Jelly's Last Jam* is either self-consciously "primitive" bluesy screaming and wailing or the peppy, corny sort of Dixieland that always turns up in Broadway shows about the 1920s. Except for one number that is literally transcribed from a Morton band record, it has nothing to do with Jelly Roll Morton, and he would have hated it.

Theatrical presentations that radically distort the life and art of their subjects—even to the point of what Butch Thompson, speaking of *Jelly's Last Jam*, aptly termed "character assassination"—are no novelty. Besides, *Jelly's Last Jam* is a very entertaining show. But it is also a deeply disturbing one. The guiding idea of the script is that the only proper job for a black musician—or, I suppose, any black artist—is to represent, express, mirror, the black community, the black past, the black experience. If he or she does this adequately, then the achievement embodied in the work will belong not to him or her but to the black community as a whole.

As we have seen, Jelly Roll Morton's musical experience was exceptionally rich and varied, and he consciously made use of every bit of it in his work—as he loved to say, "I transformed every style to mine." That may or may not constitute mirroring the black experience; plainly the creators of *Jelly's Last Jam* thought not. It is often said that to speak for more than just themselves is not only the obligation but also the special privilege of black artists. I think this is nothing more than a high-toned version of the old "natural rhythm" line: pretending to elevate, it actually diminishes, by depriving the black artist of the freedom and auton-

omy most of us automatically accord other artists.

As it applies to jazz, this view of the black artist stems from the nagging desire to prove that jazz is directly and recognizably derived from West African music. Of course, most of the originators of jazz and virtually all its greatest innovators have been African-Americans. But it does not follow that the musical materials out of which jazz was formed were imported from Africa. There may indeed be elements of African music in early jazz, but too much evidence has been irretrievably lost for us today to identify them with certainty. What is clear is that jazz inherited from European classical music not only the Western tonal system but also its characteristic modes of phrase construction, ornamentation, harmonic patterning, voice leading, and rhythmic structure (the four-beat bar and the four-bar unit).

It has evidently been widely felt that proving once and for all the African derivation of jazz would somehow increase the dignity of what Morton, Armstrong, Ellington, and the rest achieved. But why should anyone imagine that what these men achieved needs any boost or justification? What they did—wonderfully, mysteriously, even miraculously, considering the conditions of their lives—was to create a new music that has gained enduring international attention and love over the past sixty years, a music European in its essentials yet unlike anything that had come before, and, as it happens, not African in any recognizable ways. That would seem an achievement both great and unparalleled, beyond the power of anyone to augment or diminish.

FORTUNATELY, almost all of Morton's sizable recorded legacy is now available, in good sound, on compact discs. The one glaring omission is the Library of Congress recordings: a CD reissue was begun, but it has been halted for copyright reasons.

Morton's recording career began in 1923, with a three-year string of acoustic solo and band sides and an as yet undetermined number of piano rolls. Most of the solo records are excellent, marked by the textural variety and contrast, the unique mixture of almost formal delicacy and hard-driving swing, and the rich melodic and harmonic in-

vention characteristic of his best later work. But the band records, some of which were made with the white New Orleans Rhythm Kings, are a disappointment. They give no idea of the phenomenal success with which Morton would translate his piano pieces into orchestral terms only a few years later.

The great band records began in 1926, when Morton was signed by Victor, the company for which he would record until 1930 and to which he would return briefly in 1939. His first three Victor sessions, held in Chicago in September and December, are the peak of his recording career and, indeed, of recorded New Orleans jazz. The recorded sound—electrical recording had come in 1925—is superb, and the sidemen were the best available. Any listener unacquainted with Morton's music should begin here.

Every one of the eleven sides recorded on those three dates is filled with beautifully imagined musical and instrumental surprises. On "Black Bottom Stomp," Omer Simeon's intense, strictly regular, and gorgeously played low-register clarinet solo is followed by a piano solo in which the rhythm section suddenly drops out, leaving Morton free to do almost nothing for a couple of bars while the music seems to float gracefully free of all moorings—until he begins to build steadily toward the thrilling climax that takes us into George Mitchell's muted-cornet stop-time chorus. On "Dead Man Blues," Morton has three clarinets play a little chorus made up of tidy repeated figures, and then play it again. But the second time through, Kid Ory's lazy, mocking trombone slips in under them, poking fun at their primness. On "Original Jelly-Roll Blues," Simeon's clarinet and Mitchell's muted cornet interweave relaxed, delicate lines while the drummer Andrew Hilaire keeps a strict rumba beat on castanets. Morton begins "The Chant" by whirling us through a dazzling succession of keys—repeated four- and eight-bar segments in D-flat, D, and B-flat—before finally settling in A-flat. The mercurial swiftness and wit of instrumental interaction remind one of the interaction between voices and orchestra in Mozart's great operatic comedies. The particular qualities that are repeatedly played off against each other—strictness and formality against looseness and ease—reflect Morton's

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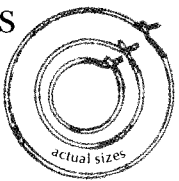
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own musical education. But the wit, grace, and finesse of his music, its characteristic mixture of high spirits and high intelligence, its clear-eyed lack of sentimentality—these and other qualities evoke not the nineteenth-century Romantic music Morton had heard at the French Opera House but the Mozart and Haydn he probably did not know.

Those who played with Morton have told of the hours of demanding rehearsal that preceded each of the finest recording sessions. They have also made it clear that both ensembles and solos (except, of course, for piano solos) were written out in advance. This is borne out by the large number of alternate masters that exist of the Morton band records. It was Morton's great gift, as it was to be Duke Ellington's (and perhaps no one else's), that he could make complex, structurally perfect composition sound as free and spontaneous as improvisation. Comparing alternate masters enables us to look into his workshop.

Morton's next pair of Victor sessions, which took place in June of 1927, were almost as fine as the first three. Especially notable are his imaginative orchestration of his piano piece "The Pearls" and two trios, "Wolverine Blues" and "Mr. Jelly-Lord," which were recorded with the Dodds brothers. In June of 1928 Simeon returned for another session that also included a trio, "Shreveport Stomp," done with the drummer Tommy Benford, and in December of 1928 Morton recorded the stunningly beautiful "Deep Creek," along with the enthusiastic but disorganized "Red Hot Pepper."

The band recordings grow more uneven from here on. Morton was now beginning to use a big-band format rather than the old New Orleans front line of clarinet, trumpet, and trombone, in order to compete with bands like those of Fletcher Henderson and the young Ellington. There are still some very fine sides: "Burnin' the Iceberg," "Low Gravy," "Blue Blood Blues," "Gambling Jack," the Ellingtonish "New Orleans Bump," and the haunting "If Someone Would Only Love Me" are among the best. There are also four fine trio sides with Ellington's clarinetist Barney Bigard and the New Orleans drummer Zutty Singleton, along with two magnificent vocal accompaniments that make one wish

Morton had recorded more. On "I Hate a Man Like You" and "Don't Tell Me Nothin' 'Bout My Man," Morton, playing by himself, partners the blues singer Lizzie Miles like a great male dancer, never putting himself forward but always highlighting her, constantly implying with a rhythmic ease and subtlety more notes than he plays.

In 1930 Victor failed to renew Morton's contract, and the recordings stopped. The Depression years were bad for him as for all musicians, and perhaps worse for him because his constant bragging had made him many enemies. The only recordings he made between his last Victor date, in October of 1930, and his arrival at the Library of Congress, in May of 1938, are two sides, "Never Had No Lovin'" and "I'm Alone Without You." Though cut in August of 1934, they were not issued until 1948 and are not now available. The group was an eight-piece swing band led by the trumpeter Wingy Manone and including Artie Shaw and Dickie Wells. On "I'm Alone Without You," Morton has a half-chorus that is perfectly fine in itself but sounds so hopelessly out of date, so utterly foreign to its surroundings, that for the first time one feels sorry for him. The following year he left New York to try his luck as a fight promoter in Washington, D.C.

After several years out of the music business Morton finally took a job as a pianist and emcee at a down-at-heel Washington nightclub, and began to attract the attention of the steadily growing young audience for early jazz—an audience that, fortunately, included Alan Lomax. From December of 1938 to January of 1940 Morton recorded four solo sides for Jazz Man, a small Washington label; eight band sides for Victor's Bluebird label; and ten solo sides and twelve band sides for General, which were later reissued on Commodore. In November of 1940 he heard that his godmother had died in Los Angeles, and he headed for the West Coast, leaving his wife in New York, in order to care for his godfather. He died in Los Angeles on July 10, 1941, of heart trouble and asthma, perhaps caused by a stab wound that he had received a few years earlier in Washington.

The solo sides, especially the ones on General that have vocals, are in a class with the best of the Library of Congress

material, but the band sides are very uneven. The two Bluebird sessions were led by the raucous swing trumpeter Sidney de Paris, and featured the clarinetist Albert Nicholas and (in the first of the two sessions) the great Sidney Bechet on soprano sax. The sides are both slick and sloppy, the under-rehearsed work of gifted but hastily assembled players. Morton sings a few vocals, but he has only one solo and sounds detached. On the General band sides De Paris is replaced by the far more congenial New Orleans veteran Red Allen. Nicholas plays better, and Morton, sounding thoroughly at home, is very much in the foreground.

HOW CAN ALL this music be had on compact disc? Those who want an excellent sampling of the Victor band sides will find it on Bluebird 6588-2-RB-11, produced by RCA/BMG. For those who want to dig somewhat deeper, the Smithsonian Collection of Recordings has issued a three-disc selection of the early solos (RD 043), the great 1926-1928 band sides (RD 044), and the later solos and band sides (RD 045).

The heart of Morton's commercially recorded output—all of the solo and band sides he recorded for Victor in 1926-1930 and for Bluebird in 1939—is available, complete with alternate masters, in the five-disc Bluebird RCA/BMG set 2361-2RB59. The sound, however, is a little thick and bassy. Five individually packaged JSP discs (JSPCD 321/325) have fresher, fuller sound, but do not include the 1939 band sides. Also, the two masters of any given piece are not on adjacent tracks, as they are on the Bluebird set, but on different discs. The Victor band sides, from 1926 through the last session with Simeon in 1928, together with some less important band records for other labels from the same period, are on two EPM discs (FDC 5108 and 982202), with the members of each pair of alternate masters on adjacent tracks. (JSP discs are imported from England by Roundup Records, 800-443-4727; EPM discs are imported from France by Qualiton Imports, 24-02 40th Avenue, Long Island City, New York 11101.)

The 1923-1924 solos are on Milestone MCD-47018-2, along with a few early band records and two duets between Morton and the cornetist King Oliver; the 1926-1939 solos are on an-

other EPM disc (982212). All of Morton's solo records are collected in a two-disc set from Music Memoria (34000), imported from France by Allegro Corporation (12630 N.E. Marx Street, Portland, Oregon 97230-1059). All of Morton's early solo and band sides, from 1923 up to the time when he signed with Victor in 1926, are on two Média 7 Masters of Jazz discs (MJCD 19 and 20). A generous selection of the New Orleans Rhythm Kings sides, including those on which Morton sat in, is on Milestone MCD-47020-2. Biograph BCD 111-DDD has some of the piano rolls from 1924-1926.

All the discs listed so far, except for the single Bluebird disc and the three from Smithsonian, include alternate masters where they exist. The splendid Chronological Classics series, imported from France by Qualiton, does not provide alternate masters but has presented an otherwise virtually complete survey of Morton's recorded output (except, of course, for the Library of Congress recordings) on seven discs: Classics 584 (1923-1924), 599 (1924-1926), 612 (1926-1928), 627 (1928-1929), 642 (1929-1930), 654 (1930-1939), and 668 (1939-1940).

I should add that the best Morton discography is contained in Laurie Wright's *Mr. Jelly Lord* (Chigwell: Storyville Publications, 1980), and that anyone who wants to try out Morton's music on the piano should get hold of James Dapogny's excellent book of transcriptions, *Ferdinand "Jelly Roll" Morton: The Collected Piano Music* (Smithsonian Institution Press). Finally, those who want to hear exactly what was done to Morton's music in *Jelly's Last Jam* may compare Luther Henderson's score (Mercury 314 510 846-2) with Morton's own recordings of the tunes Henderson used, which have been thoughtfully collected by RCA/BMG on yet another Bluebird compact disc (66103-2).

Someone once defined snobbery as pride of status without pride of function. By this definition Jelly Roll Morton was no snob. For he was always ready to demonstrate the abilities and accomplishments on which he based his claims to attention and applause. Omer Simeon, his favorite clarinetist, affectionately recalled, "One thing I always noticed about Jelly, he could back up everything he said by what he could do." □

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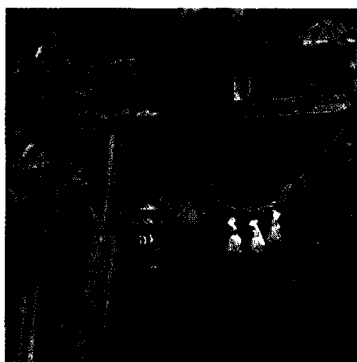
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The Joys of Japan

Learning to like the most interesting place on earth

by James Fallows

ANYONE CAN THINK of reasons not to go to Japan. The prices have never been low, and if you're paying in dollars, they're higher now than ever before. Getting to Japan from North America is slow and expensive, and once you're there, it's fast but expensive to move from place to place. Narita Airport, the bottleneck through which most foreign travelers must pass to enter Japan, is crowded, inconvenient, and generally the most unpleasant major terminal in the First World. (Yes, I have been to JFK.) In the summer the weather is rainy and hot, and in the springtime it can be rainy and cold. Without serious study you will never pick up Japanese the way you might pick up conversational bits of a European language on a brief trip.

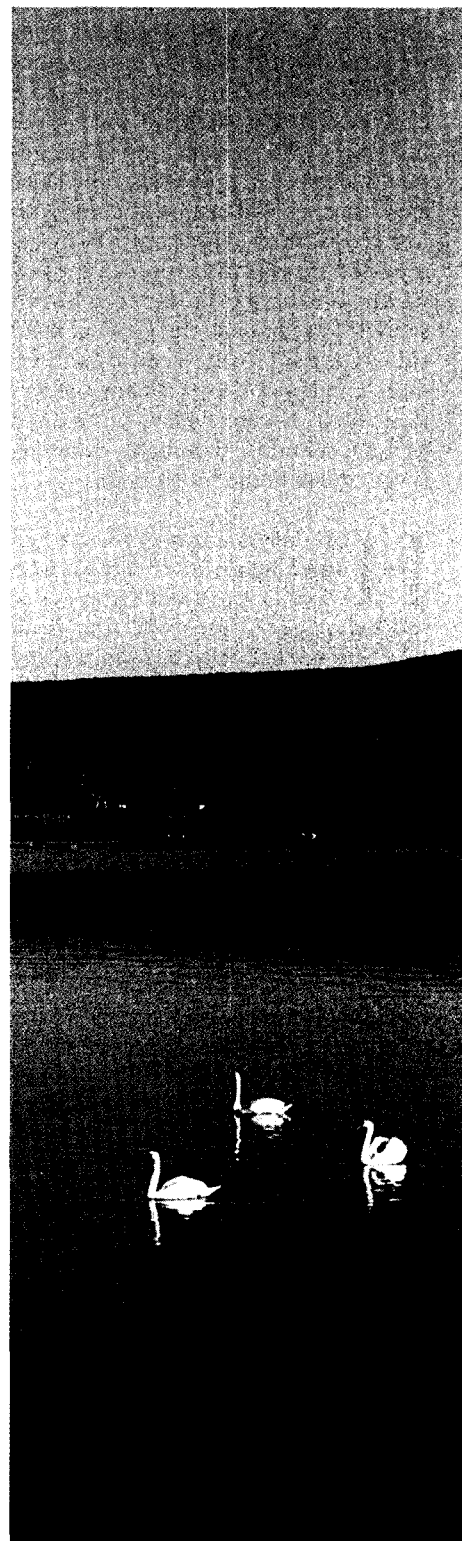
But let's keep things in perspective. A trip to Japan may be expensive, but it's as cheap now as it's likely ever to be. Narita, while still terrible, has been slightly less jammed since a second passenger terminal opened up. The summer is muggy, but the fall and winter are glorious and crisp. Precisely because Japanese is so different from English, you learn more from coping with an expression like *Itadakimasu* before meals than from saying *Bon appétit*.

No matter how troublesome travel to Japan may seem, the fact remains that

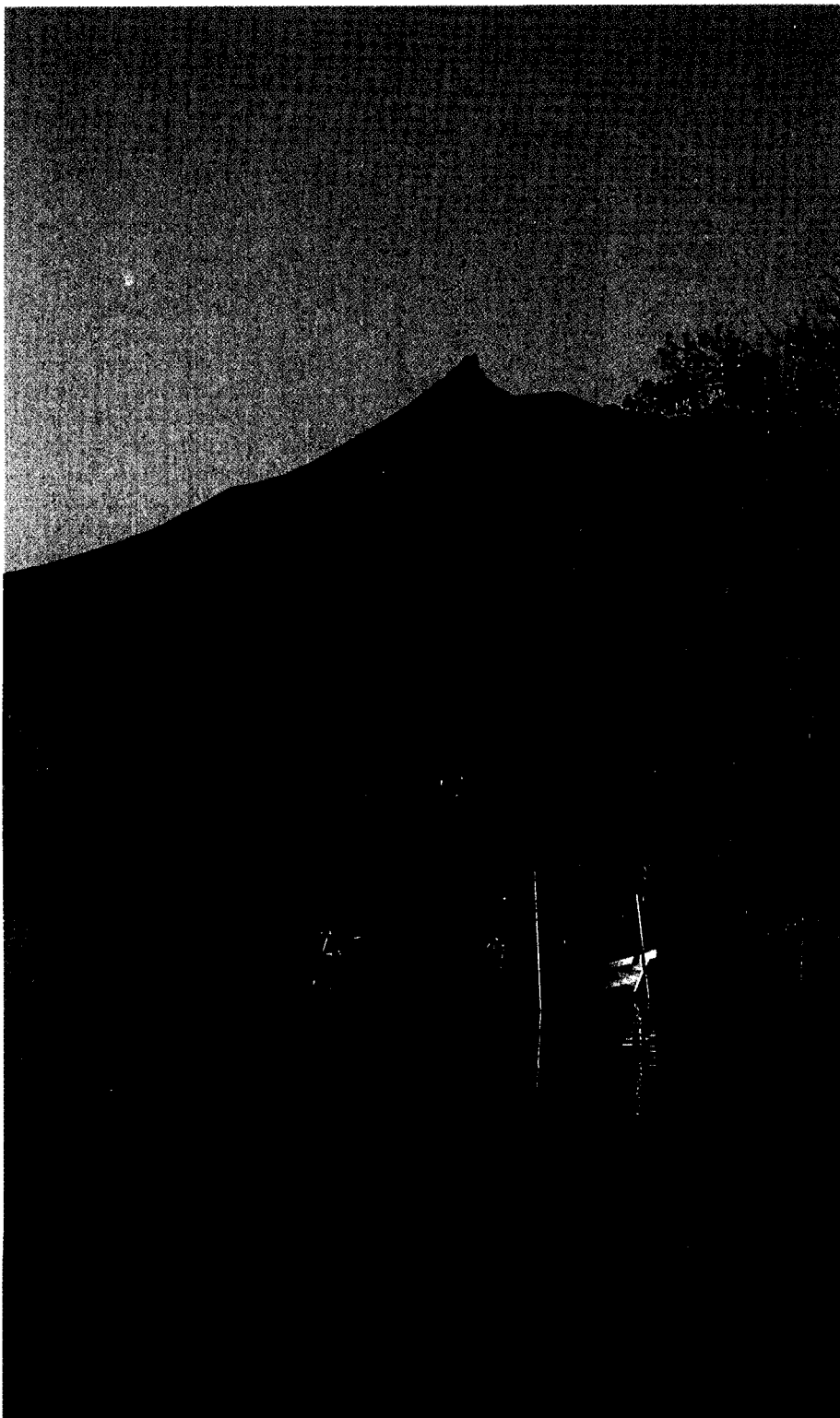
no one is the same after seeing the place. You may think you've heard more about Japan than you can stand. All those annoyingly perfect industries! All those well-trained but overstressed youths! Hearing about it simply is not the same as having a look. You may like it more after you've spent some time there. You may like it less. But I can't imagine that you'll feel indifferent or bored.

While Japan is not the most relaxing and pleasant spot on the planet, it is clearly the most interesting. I could mount a policy-oriented defense of this opinion, but I'll save that for another day. For travel purposes, the crucial fact is that being in Japan makes you feel more alive. At least it makes me feel that way. If life means responding to surprises, seeing something new, being forced to reconsider what you've always thought, then Japan is for the foreign traveler a fountainhead of life.

YOU ALMOST have to start in Tokyo. The city so completely dominates the country's political, financial, intellectual, and cultural activity that to visit Japan without spending time in Tokyo would be bizarre. If you are in Japan for only four or five days, it is hard to go anywhere but Tokyo. Kyoto, three hours away by bullet train, is the next mandatory stop. But the country is full of sec-



ond-tier destinations, each of them generally similar to all the rest of Japan but also different in subtle, instructive ways. None of them is as raucous or active as Tokyo, but many can be equally surprising and life-giving. Here are three suggestions, from hundreds of possibilities, about where you might look if you have a few more days to spend.



Because Sapporo was the site of the 1972 Winter Olympics, Americans who have heard of it often assume it is a ski resort. In fact it is Japan's version of a rollicking frontier town. Sapporo is the main city on the island of Hokkaido, Japan's Alaska-like northern appendage, which was

settled much later than the rest of the country and still has a vast-open-spaces feel. Train stations on the Japanese "mainland" often hang travel posters showing Hokkaido's sweeping mead-

ows and broad vistas, with slogans like "Big Country Hokkaido!" The idea that you

*Above, Lake Onuma and the Mount Koma volcano, on Hokkaido.
Above left, a Shinto shrine*

could stretch out your arms without poking through a paper shoji screen, or ramble around without bumping into hordes of commuters, will seem very alluring after a stint in Tokyo.

Physically Sapporo is a startling contrast to other Japanese cities. Tokyo and Kyoto have twisting alleyways; Sapporo is laid out with broad avenues on a right-angle grid. There is a historical reason for this look—advisers from the United States helped to draw up the town plans—but I prefer to see it as a sociological symbol. Sapporo seems open and jolly, easier to take in and understand at a glance than most other parts of Japan. Modern Japan has been called many things, but not carefree. Up on the northern frontier, Sapporo seems determined to have a good time, no matter how cold it is outside.

There are two right times to go to Sapporo: the dead of winter and high summer. In early February of each year Sapporo holds the Yuki Matsuri, or Snow Festival, part of the long human tradition of laughing at nature's worst, and also a brilliant scheme for attracting tourists when the ground is frozen and the snow is deep. The Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force (that is, the army) is concentrated in Hokkaido, where it theoretically guards against a Russian invasion but day by day does not have much to do. To apply themselves productively, its members spend the fall and winter collecting snow with bulldozers and building the mammoth snow and ice sculptures that go on display at the festival. Avenues through the middle of town display towering ice versions of Bengal tigers, the Statue of Liberty, peacocks, spaceships, and so on. The best time to see them is at night, when the ice catches the city lights (and the lights of the many TV news crews). Outside town, near the old Olympic skiing courses, the army shows off by erecting truly mammoth structures. One year my family saw a replica of Notre Dame cathedral which must have been smaller than the original but from up close looked just about as big.

Sapporo is full of birds, leaves, and animal sounds. I wish I could have gone every summer night to the picnic grounds at the Sapporo Beer brewery, which holds all-you-can-eat-and-drink barbecues for 3,000 yen per person (now just under \$30). In the summer you can get to Sapporo either by plane from Tokyo or on a day-long train trip,

which takes you through the farmland of northern Honshu and the hot-springs resorts of Hokkaido's southern tip (a train tunnel runs beneath the Tsugaru straits that separate Honshu from Hokkaido). Or you can take a four-hour ferryboat ride over choppy seas.

MEIJI MURA is an hour by bus from Nagoya, which is itself about two hours southwest of Tokyo on the main bullet-train line. Nagoya is a proud medium-sized city with an image problem within Japan. Tokyo is Tokyo, Osaka has a distinct second-city pride and culture, Kyoto has obvious pretensions of its own. Nagoya is, first and last, a manufacturing town. Toyota's world headquarters is nearby, as are countless steel and robotics works. According to Kenneth Curtis, a prominent economist based in Tokyo, Nagoya accounts for 43 percent of Japan's trade surplus with the United States. I am sure the Nagoya city fathers have never been to Trenton. If they had, they would have bought rights to a modified version of



the motto blazoned on a bridge over the Delaware River: TRENTON MAKES THE WORLD TAKES.

Those who enjoy factory tours will find Nagoya engrossing. The Noritake china works is right in the city. Dozens of knife and silverware factories, run by descendants of Japan's traditional sword-makers, are about an hour away

in a small mountain town called Seki. Even those who don't like factories should go to Seki, for nearby is Meiji Mura, an evocative and instructive large-scale architecture museum.

If you are the least bit ambitious, the Meiji era is the time you would most want to have been alive in Japan. During this period, which ran from 1868 to 1912, the Japanese snapped out of centuries of shogun-esque backwardness and caught up with the science, guns, and machinery of the Western world. All around them other

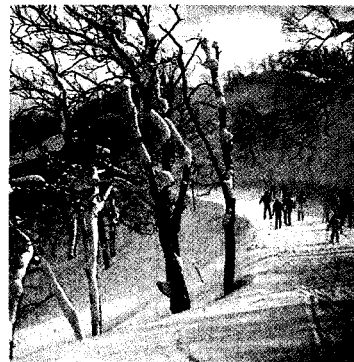
Asian peoples had been subjugated by Westerners. Smart young Japanese fanned out around the world to learn how their country could get strong enough fast enough to avoid this fate.

During these years Japan exploded with ideas and experimentation. Prints from that era show Japanese scholars in frock coats and top hats, trying out different aspects of European culture to discover which ones mattered for material progress. The bulk ingestion of Western styles extended to architecture as well. All across the country, next to Shinto shrines and bamboo houses, Meiji build-

ers put up structures modeled on those in Paris or Vienna. Most of them have now vanished. The ones that were not pulled down for Japan's constant urban renovation were destroyed by American bombing during the Second World War.

"Meiji Mura" means "Meiji Village," and here many of the best buildings

from the Meiji era have been collected and preserved. The most famous single structure is the entrance hall of Frank Lloyd Wright's Imperial Hotel in Tokyo,



Above, at one of Hokkaido's many ski resorts. Below, off the island's Shakotan Peninsula

which opened just before the catastrophic Kanto earthquake of 1923 and was one of a handful of major structures to survive. (Wright's hotel was finally demolished forty years later, to permit construction of a modern, high-rise Imperial Hotel.) The fifty-plus other buildings in Meiji Mura, spread over 250 acres, include banks, churches, a jail, a Kabuki theater, a sake warehouse,

and the home of Lafcadio Hearn. A few of them you might pass without noticing if you found them in Amsterdam or Berlin, but most are intriguing in themselves and for the historic drama they illustrate. Spending all day among these buildings was, for me, like looking through page after page of portraits from another age. It is as close as we can come to having been alive then.

MOST AMERICANS have heard of Nagasaki and wish they hadn't. In our history it is twinned with Hiroshima. In reality the two cities have almost nothing in common except the atomic bomb. For better and worse, Hiroshima really has made itself into a living memorial to the bomb victims. Hiroshima was the world's first nuclear target, and every circumstance emphasized the bomb's role in its history: the city was built on a big, flat river delta, perfect for destruction from above; the bomb was a direct hit; John Hersey went there. Although Hiroshima was and is a major industrial center (it is where Mazdas come from), it is full of A-bomb shrines and museums, and its historic role will always revolve around the bomb.

Nagasaki has a bomb museum too—one that is more understated than Hiroshima's and to my mind sadder and more moving, because it seems an expression of private grief rather than a public, political statement. The museum is far from the city center, because Nagasaki's bomb fell several miles off target. The bomb itself will never be at

the center of Nagasaki's identity, as it is at the center of Hiroshima's. Whereas Meiji Mura illustrates in a fascinating way the results of Japan's deliberate attempt to incorporate parts of a foreign culture, Nagasaki is Japan's one example of long-term natural inclusion.

European explorers and missionaries made their first Japanese landings on the island of Kyushu, near Nagasaki, almost 500 years ago. For a while they were tolerated, especially the Portuguese Jesuits, who made thousands of converts in Kyushu. Even after the shoguns launched their "closed country" policy in the early seventeenth century, forbidding contact between Japanese and foreigners and killing Japanese Christians who wouldn't recant, Nagasaki remained Japan's one opening to the outside world. For the next 200 years Dutch merchants based in Nagasaki were the source of most of Japan's commerce with and information about the West. Kyushu in general and Nagasaki in particular have had much larger Christian populations than the rest of Japan—an indication of how far open they were to outside influence. When the atomic bomb on Nagasaki missed the Mitsubishi shipyards that were its target and fell in the Urakami district, several miles away, it destroyed Japan's main Catholic cathedral and a large Christian neighborhood.

To my taste, Nagasaki is the most beautiful city in Japan. Like Sydney and Seattle, it is built around its bays. The knifelike fjords of Nagasaki Harbor cut into the hillsides. Up and down the hills, on little terraced plots, are placed small houses, two-story hotels, jewel-like garden plots. Sometimes the natural beauty of the Japanese landscape is too subtle to appreciate by simply looking at it. The vistas from Nagasaki would impress anyone. The most spectacular view is from Glover Garden, a collection of Victorian-style mansions built by British traders who came to Nagasaki in the Meiji years. On the grounds is a statue of a woman in the role of Madame Butterfly, who if she had really existed would have been from Nagasaki, and farther down the hill a museum describing the long interactions (many of them military) among Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese in Kyushu. From Glover Garden you look down at the deep blue of the harbor, feel the wind from China in your face, and watch ships set sail for San Diego and Shanghai.

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Peace in the Middle East (2)

Is the peace with Egypt an encouraging example for Israel?

In the on-again/off-again Mid-East Peace negotiations the Arabs expect that, in exchange for peace, the territories that they consider to be "occupied" by Israel be restored to them, specifically, the so-called "West Bank", Gaza, and the Golan Heights.

What are the facts?

Peace with Egypt is the coldest possible.

For its agreement to make true peace with Israel, Egypt received the huge Sinai Peninsula in which Israel had invested over \$10 billion. It had created flourishing cities, some of the most advanced military and naval installations in the world, and had developed oil fields that would have made it energy independent for the foreseeable future. Without firing a shot, Egypt received all of this, plus generous grants from the United States—\$40 billion to date. What

Egypt gave in return was a piece of paper. And even that was hedged. It would allow

"Israel's present government must be commended for proceeding with the greatest caution in the current peace negotiations."

Egypt to join in an "Arab War" against Israel. The peace between Israel and Egypt, which the Israelis had envisioned to be like the peace between Germany and France, turned out, unfortunately, to be the "coldest peace" possible. It is, less of a peace than a de facto state of non-belligerence. The Israeli ambassador in Cairo is isolated and blacklisted and does not participate in any official functions of the Egyptian government. There is practically no trade between the two countries and no cultural exchange. The public sector of Egypt, which constitutes 80% of the total economy is forbidden to do business with Israel. Private enterprises are actively discouraged and often threatened when they try to

become engaged with Israeli firms. Israeli firms are barred from submitting tenders for local projects. For "security reasons" Israeli firms are not allowed to participate in trade fairs. Although quite a few Israelis visit Egypt, hardly any Egyptians go to Israel since those who do wish to visit are summoned to the security police for lengthy interrogation.

Not forthcoming on diplomatic front.

Many Israelis have been killed in Egypt or on the Egyptian border. The Egyptian media, including the official and semi-official press, are full of anti-Israel and anti-Jewish venom, preaching hatred

and prejudice. There have been numerous instances of "crazed" Egyptian soldiers shooting up

Israeli buses traveling along the border highways, to the general applause of the state-controlled media. On the diplomatic front, the Egyptians aren't any more forthcoming. Egypt spearheaded the campaign to keeping the "Zionism is racism" resolution in the U.N., contrary to U.S. wishes. Egypt exerts much effort to prevent African countries from establishing or renewing diplomatic relations with Israel. Egyptian diplomats, including Butros-Butros Ghali, now secretary general of the United Nations, lobbied fervently against the loan guarantees that Israel needed to absorb and to settle the hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees who have already arrived or will still arrive from the former Soviet Union.

The saving grace for Israel in its very cold peace with Egypt is that the Sinai is very large, and serves as a buffer zone. But in the Golan Heights, which the Syrians wish to have returned in exchange for "peace", and the "West Bank" and Gaza, which the Palestinians wish to have given to them as a "reward" for stopping the "intifada", there is no room at all for buffer zones. Although autonomy for the native Arab population is definitely an Israeli policy goal and a commitment under the Camp David Accords, the "West Bank" and Gaza and the Golan cannot possibly be surrendered to another sovereignty for any foreseeable future. It would make Israel totally indefensible. If the peace with Egypt is an example of what peace with Syria or with the Palestinians would look like, Israel's present government must be commended for proceeding with the greatest caution in the current negotiations and not to entrust its survival to empty promises. Only when the Arabs truly accept Israel as part of the Middle East should any further "land for peace" adjustments be considered.

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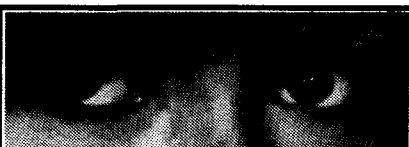
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A FEW WORDS about practicalities. Check the dates of seasonal holidays—Golden Week, in late April and early May, the O-bon ceremonies, in mid-August, during which families return to their ancestral villages to honor the country's dead—and stay out of Japan then, because the whole country is traveling. Although it goes against the American frontier spirit, you should check with travel agents or airlines about package airfare-hotel deals. Japan runs on the package-deal principle, and if you can make hotel arrangements ahead of time, you can save a lot compared with showing up unannounced. If you are going to spend more than a week in Japan, be sure to buy a Japan Rail pass before you go. They're sold only to short-term visitors, and only outside Japan. You're much more likely to hop on a bullet train toward Nagasaki or Sapporo if you've already paid for it than if you have to shell out hundreds of dollars extra.

Don't ask your friends in Tokyo to meet you at Narita—it's like asking someone from Los Angeles to pick you up at San Diego's Lindbergh Field. Go into town either on the JR Narita Express train or by "limousine bus" to major hotels—not by taxi, which would mean a fare of several hundred dollars. It's a good idea always to avoid taxis. The subways and buses are cheaper and more interesting and get you right into a coping-with-the-environment mood. If you arrive at Narita with too many bags to lug to the train, check them in the terminal with ABC Baggage, a Federal Express-like outfit that will deliver them the next day for about \$10 a bag. Everyone in Japan knows about ABC; few first-time travelers do. On your way out of the country go to Tokyo City Air Terminal, in the Hako-zaki district of town, rather than directly to the airport. You can check in for the flight there, get your passport stamped, and get rid of your bags. Then you can take a bus to Narita and bypass the throngs in the check-in and passport queues.

Big hotels in Japan are obviously expensive. If someone else is paying for your stay in Tokyo, try to go to the Imperial (ideal location downtown), the Okura (less convenient location, but vain about its perfect service), or the New Otani (spectacular gardens). If the trip is on you, look for the "business hotels" that abound in every city.

These institutions, known as *bijinesu hateru* in the exotic Japanese tongue, offer no frills but perfectly adequate small rooms for about \$40 to \$100 a night. The front-desk staff may not speak English, but if you walk in, they can probably figure out why you've come. Also consider the fanciful structures known as "love hotels," where Japanese couples go to escape the children, parents, or in-laws and fantasize for a while. Any structure you see in Japan that looks as if it came from Las Vegas is a love hotel. They rent by the hour or the night and cost about the same as business hotels. For the names and locations of specific hostels check with the Japan Travel Bureau office in larger cities or take along a recent guidebook. There are now dozens of books to choose from. A few that seem reliable to me are *Japan: A Travel Survival Kit* (Lonely Planet), *Gateway to Japan* (Kodansha), and *Japan: A Budget Travel Guide* (Kodansha). The last book, by Ian McQueen, is the most entertaining of the three. Unfortunately, unlike the other two, it lacks bilingual Japanese-English maps, which are a godsend when you need directions or advice.

Japanese food is exquisite, healthful, and ridiculously expensive in its fancy-restaurant manifestations. There is also a less-publicized trencherman side to Japanese cuisine, which I prefer for reasons of budget and sheer fun. On a simple calories-per-yen basis it's hard to beat the quick ramen-and-soba (noodle) stands found in every train station and department store. There you can fill up on pasta for a couple of dollars. Sapporo in particular is famous for its big bowls of steaming ramen. Placards on restaurant walls list dozens of varieties, depending on what vegetables or meats are tossed in. You may not be able to read the signs, but if you can say *Yakisoba kudasai*—"Bring on the fried noodles!"—you will not go hungry in Japan. The other cheap, hearty, tasty staples of workaday Japanese fare include *tonkatsu*, a fried pork cutlet drenched in a sweetish-sour sauce; *okonomiyaki*, a kind of frittata whose name literally means "fried the way you like it," which is sold by street vendors and in little cafés; *gyoza*, highly spiced and garlicky fried dumplings; and the ubiquitous rice-stew dishes known as *donburi* and *kare raisu* ("curry rice").

Itadakimasu! ☐

Books

Making Faith Possible

by Gordon D. Marino

KIERKEGAARD'S WRITINGS
by Søren Kierkegaard.
General editor: Howard Hong.
Princeton University Press.

ONE OF Søren Aabye Kierkegaard's most celebrated works, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, sold a mere fifty copies in his lifetime. Nevertheless, the nineteenth-century Danish philosopher was confident that history would offer him a warmer reception than his contemporaries did. The Swedes were the first to recognize Kierkegaard's importance, followed by the Germans and the French. The English-speaking world knew virtually nothing about Kierkegaard until 1908, when a book of selections was rendered into English.

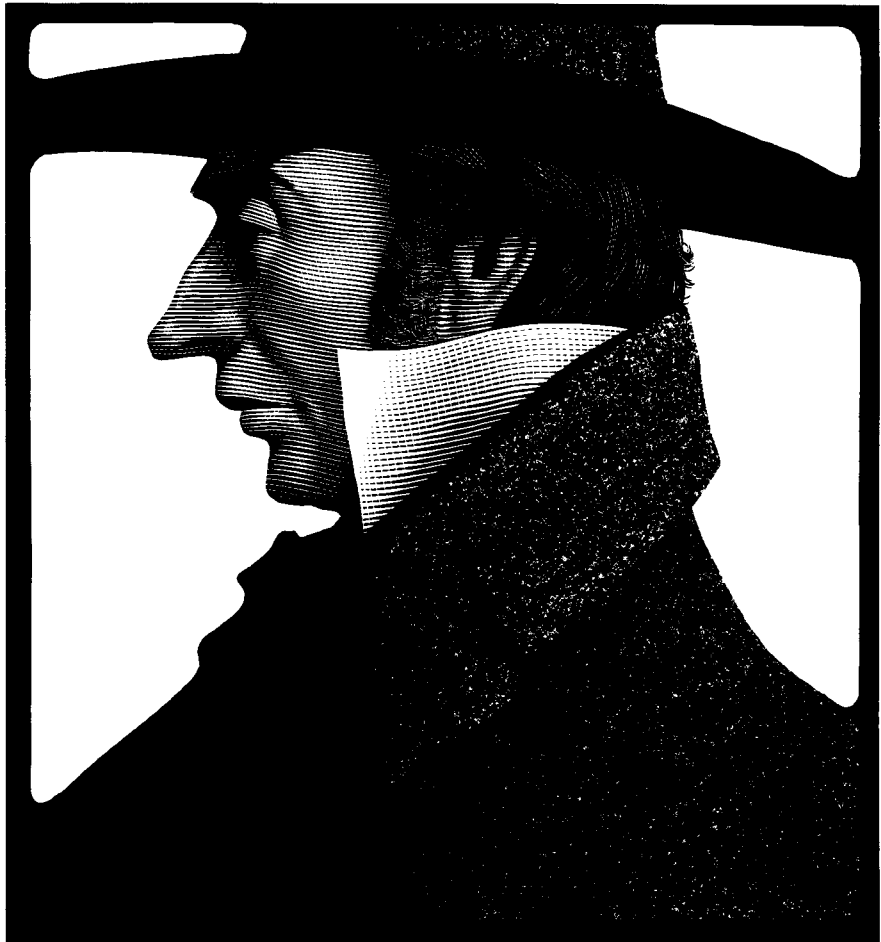
The first major English-translation effort was undertaken by Walter Lowrie in the late 1930s. Lowrie was in his sixties when he stumbled upon Kierkegaard and began his crusade to introduce the philosopher to English-speaking readers. Lowrie immediately learned Danish and set about translating most of the Kierkegaardian corpus; he also wrote an immense biography. He was eventually joined by a University of Minnesota professor named David Swenson, who, browsing in some far corner of the library stacks, chanced upon one of Kierkegaard's books, read it for more than two days without a break, and then devoted the rest of his life to awakening the English-speaking world to Kierkegaard's significance. Like the Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno, Howard Hong was introduced to Kierkegaard through his interest in the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen. In the early thirties Hong read a piece of literary criticism in which the author insisted that Ibsen was essentially a dramatizer of Kierkegaard's philosophy. Hong resolved to see for himself.

He and his helpmate, the poet Edna Hong, have been translating Kierkegaard ever since. In 1968 they won the National Book Award for their rendition of Kierkegaard's journals and papers. Their translations are uniformly excellent; moreover, their historical introductions and copious notes are a welcome guide for Kierkegaard tyros and scholars alike. In the 1970s the Honges entered into a contract with Princeton University Press to publish thousands of pages from Kierkegaard's journals, correspondence, and books. This was hardly a commercially promising arrangement. After all, a translation of this scope might easily take a lifetime, and the Honges were both in their sixties. One of Kierkegaard's recurrent messages is that faith believes that in faith all things are possible. With the recent publication of the seventeenth and eighteenth books in the series, the Honges are approaching

the completion of what had seemed an impossible task.

Kierkegaard used to moan that what the world needed wasn't more knowledge or another grand theorist but another Socrates—that is, an examiner capable of helping a self-deluded public to search itself out. He himself was just that Socrates. I have heard more than one theologian, fed up with doctrinal quarrels, mutter that what the world needs now is not another Augustine or Luther but another Kierkegaard. As the Honges' translations reveal, however, we don't need another Kierkegaard: the writings of the old one will do just fine.

KIERKEGAARD, whose name in Old Danish means "churchyard" (with all the familiar connotations of "graveyard"), was born in Copenhagen in 1813. He was the youngest of seven children born to Michael Peder-





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son Kierkegaard and his second wife and quondam servant, Anne Sørensdatter Lund. In thousands of pages of personal jottings Kierkegaard did not mention his mother once, and yet his journals swim with notes about his autodidact father. By all accounts Kierkegaard's melancholic, pious, and indisputably brilliant father left an unusually deep impression on him. Some would call it a scar.

Michael Kierkegaard (1756-1838) was born into a very poor family in western Denmark. As a young boy he worked as a shepherd. One unholy day he was so aggrieved about his poor and lonely lot that he cursed God. Almost miraculously his lot changed, but he lived to rue his outburst. When he was eleven, a relative took him to Copenhagen to work in the dry-goods business. In a short while he had his own store. He invested in real estate and stocks and soon was so well off that his progeny would never have to fret about making a living. In 1794 he married, but within two years his wife died childless. A year after her death he married his servant and cousin, Anne Lund. Five months after the wedding their first child was born. For reasons that are unclear, Kierkegaard immediately put his business into trust, and at the age of forty-one went into semi-retirement.

Before Søren was twenty-one, four of his siblings, a number of in-laws, and his mother had been buried. His father confided that the endless treks to the cemetery were all part of a divine punishment for his boyhood curse against God. The elder Kierkegaard announced to his remaining sons, Peter and Søren, that he would outlive all his children, that he was damned "to be a cross upon their graves." Søren believed him. From a secular vantage point such a prophetic pronouncement is as mad as it is cruel, but the world according to biblical faith is not the world according to Freud.

KIERKEGAARD showed considerable intellectual acuity as a youngster, but he was remarkable only for his ability to discern a person's most vulnerable points and then challenge him accordingly. In addition to drubbings from his fellow students, this ability earned him the nickname of "Gaflen"—"The Fork." He would eventually make good on this well-chosen cognomen, painfully pointing out

to an ever expanding circle of readers inconsistencies between the words and works of the Danish elite and the Lutheran State Church.

In 1830 Kierkegaard entered the University of Copenhagen. At the behest of his father he matriculated in theology, but he studied widely in the liberal arts. As Bruce Kirmmse suggests in his thorough study of the subject, *Kierkegaard in Golden Age Denmark*, the 1830s were to Denmark what the fourteenth century was to Florence. The most important literary figure of this era was the Danish playwright Johan Ludvig Heiberg. Kierkegaard attached himself to the lively coterie surrounding Heiberg. During this period, in which Kierkegaard is widely regarded as having been in rebellion against his father and his father's faith, Kierkegaard was something of an academic idler. In 1837 he was reconciled with his father, who died suddenly the next year. Kierkegaard had been at the university for eight years, but despite his father's goading he had still failed to take his exams. Explaining that he could no longer argue with a dead man, he began to apply himself. In 1840 he passed his exams, and a year later he finished his dissertation, *On the Concept of Irony: With Constant Reference to Socrates*. This magisterial study, comparing the use of irony in the Romantic age with the irony of antiquity, shows the positive impress of the reigning philosopher of the time, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831). Thereafter Kierkegaard's attitude toward Hegel would take a turn for the worse—much worse.

In 1837, when Kierkegaard was twenty-four, he had met and fallen in love with the fourteen-year-old Regine Olsen. Just over three years later they became engaged. Almost immediately after the engagement Kierkegaard began to have second thoughts. Thirteen months later he broke it off. Kierkegaard's writings sometimes suggest that the reason for the break was his desire to protect Regine from the terrible melancholy that afflicted much of the Kierkegaard family, himself and his father emphatically included. In other journal entries he stated that he simply could not at the same time serve both Regine and the Idea. He was probably right about this. Regine eventually recovered from the emotional trauma and married another suitor. Kierkegaard,

however, never got over her. She was the wife of his soul. His father, to whom many of his works are dedicated, was never far below the lines of his thought; the same was true of Regine, but even more so. Though she never responded to the one overture he made to retain some kind of relationship, he named her his sole beneficiary.

Two weeks after ending his engagement Kierkegaard left for Berlin, where, along with Karl Marx, he attended the German philosopher Friedrich Schelling's lectures. In Berlin, in the crucible of the rift with Regine, Kierkegaard came into his genius and his muse. In a four-month period, while taking five courses, he wrote *Either/Or* and *Two Upbuilding Discourses*. *Either/Or*, in style one of the most unusual philosophical tracts ever written, went through two printings and was Kierkegaard's only market success. Having had his fill of Schelling, Kierkegaard returned to Denmark and began a period of astounding literary productivity. Within the next three years he wrote *Fear and Trembling*, *Repetition*, *The Concept of Anxiety*, the sharply chiseled *Philosophical Fragments*, the immense though uneven *Stages on Life's Way*, and a shelf of more "upbuilding discourses." In 1844 Kierkegaard decided that after one more book he would lay down his pen and become the pastor of some rural parish. His literary finale was to be *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*—"concluding" because it was to be his last book, "unscientific" so as to distinguish it from the systematizing work of his antagonist Hegel, and "postscript" relative to the *Philosophical Fragments*. Yet as fate, or something higher, would have it, Kierkegaard's career as an author was far from over.

THROUGHOUT his writings Kierkegaard often returned to the theme of *inderlighed*, or "inwardness," which in its most developed form is nothing other but nothing less than Christian faith. Hegel, as Kierkegaard read him, believed the individual to be the sum of his or her outward manifestations: one is what one does. Kierkegaard, however, repeatedly insisted that the inner person and outer actions are incommensurable. Something within each of us can never be given direct outward expression. In *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard offered his famous sketch of the Knight

of Faith. Outwardly nothing about him is remarkable. He appears to lead an impeccably normal life, and yet he is possessed of an inwardness rarer than the genius of a Mozart.

In the history of ideas Hegel and Kierkegaard are forever locked in mortal combat, with Kierkegaard defending the sovereignty of the individual against the Hegelian notion that the significance of the individual derives from his or her participation in the universal or collective. Like the latent content of a dream, this conflict perpetually finds new forms of expression, the most recent of which has been the ideological struggle between Marxism and Western individualism. Still, the gravamen of Kierkegaard's charges against Hegel focuses on Hegel's influence on matters of faith. So far as Kierkegaard was concerned, Hegel—whose cultural influence was both broad and profound—had subjected faith to a fire sale. To Hegel, religion was philosophy made simple. In comparison with the intellectual demands of philosophy, the faith of an Abraham was not only simplistic but also second-rate. Kierkegaard once said that he wrote to make life more difficult for people—to dispel the delusion that faith was easy. He wrote to make faith difficult and thus possible again.

Not surprisingly, Kierkegaard liked to think that he, like the Knight of Faith, led an outwardly ordinary life. This was not entirely true, however. In December of 1845 he launched an attack on the popular Danish weekly the *Corsair*. This paper, founded in 1840, was an important component of the liberal opposition to the monarchy. Nearly everyone read the *Corsair*, and many feared turning up in one of its very popular political cartoons. The paper, which Kierkegaard rightly considered to be something of a rag, responded to his broadsides with a torrent of articles and personal caricatures. Kierkegaard soon became a negative media star—or, as he put it, "a martyr of laughter." The man who so much enjoyed walking the streets of Copenhagen could no longer make his rounds without attracting a crowd. By the end of the following year the battle was over. The editor of the *Corsair* resigned, but Kierkegaard's private life was never the same again.

In 1849 Kierkegaard published his magnum opus, the Christian psychological masterpiece *Sickness Unto Death*. This study of despair was published

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under the pseudonym Anti-Climacus. Kierkegaard wrote many books under noms de plume, each with its own perspective and style. He seriously considered publishing *Sickness Unto Death* under his own name, but decided against it because he didn't think he lived up to the ideals espoused. *Sickness Unto Death* was written from the perspective of a Christian physician at the spiritual deathbed of culture. But by his own standards Kierkegaard was only "becoming a Christian," so how could he justify signing his name to ideals that were nothing more than possibilities for him? Can one imagine a contemporary ethicist using a pseudonym because he could not honestly say that he expressed his ethical ideals in his daily life? Kierkegaard was a virtuoso of self-scrutiny.

Many have observed that we are living in an age when pastors speak as therapists and therapists as bishops. In *Sickness Unto Death*, Kierkegaard did us the exquisite service of distinguishing psychological modes of self-understanding from religious categories. Thus he drew a distinction seldom made today between depression and despair. Whereas depression is a quality of the mind-body complex, often stimulated by external factors, despair is a self-perpetuating sickness of the spirit or self. To be simultaneously happy and depressed is, of course, impossible, but, according to Kierkegaard, happiness and despair often coexist. Indeed, as he described it, the most cherished hiding place of despair is none other than "the heart of happiness." One of the defining symptoms of despair is a lack of consciousness of being a self or spirit. One can be a wizard of introspection, an expert on one's emotional life, and remain totally "unselfconscious" in the Kierkegaardian sense. Consciousness of the kind Kierkegaard tried to raise requires conviction—the conviction that one is a self. Clearly, where despair is the illness, rejecters of selfhood have a poor prognosis. If only indirectly, Kierkegaard counseled that self-consciousness is conditioned by our wider system of beliefs: to be awakened in Freudian terms is to be in a slumber according to Marx, and to be conscious according to Marx is to be comatose according to Kierkegaard. In *Sickness Unto Death*, Kierkegaard conclusively demonstrated that "depth psychology" does not necessarily depend upon psychoanalytic premises.

If you can commit yourself to reading only one of Kierkegaard's books, *Sickness Unto Death* ought to be the one.

IN 1851 Kierkegaard began a period that is widely regarded as the black hole in his life. Though he continued his journal writing, he published very little and led an increasingly isolated existence. In 1854 Bishop Jacob Mynster, who had long ministered to Kierkegaard's family, died. At his funeral the bishop appointee, Kierkegaard's former teacher Hans Martensen, referred to Mynster as "a witness to the truth," one "of the whole series of witnesses to the truth which extends through time like a chain, from the days of the Apostles to our own day." Given Kierkegaard's rationale for publishing *Sickness Unto Death* under a pseudonym, one should not be surprised that Martensen's hyperbole exhausted Kierkegaard's patience. For Kierkegaard, being a witness to Christ meant imitating Christ—that is, undergoing suffering, humiliation, and isolation for Christ. As the Bishop of Zealand, Mynster lived a life of prominence and luxury. According to Kierkegaard's criteria, this was not exactly bearing witness. Martensen's exaggerations were, Kierkegaard judged, just a logical consequence of the cheapening of religion that had long been under way in Hegelianized Christendom.

Kierkegaard now launched an attack on the Danish State Church. He demanded that Martensen explain in what sense Mynster had been a witness. After a feeble response Martensen tried to stonewall Kierkegaard, but to no avail. Kierkegaard started his own journal, in which he published broadside after broadside detailing the ways in which the institution of Christianity was leading people away from lives of Christian conviction and authenticity. For the first time in his life Kierkegaard stopped attending services, and he encouraged others to do the same, explaining that by staying home people would have one less sin on their souls, since they would no longer be participating in a process that "made a fool of God." On September 25, 1855, he delivered his last fusillade. A week later, after having spent what little remained of his inheritance, Kierkegaard collapsed on the street. On November 11, at the age of forty-two, he died from causes still uncertain.

THE INFLUENCE of world historical thinkers waxes and wanes, but interest in Kierkegaard is currently high. Though he can certainly be used as a rich resource for the criticism of postmodernism, Kierkegaard is now recognized as having anticipated a number of the signature views of this movement. Like Foucault, Kierkegaard understood that the voice of so-called dispassionate reason is usually informed by personal interests. Long before his twentieth-century brethren Kierkegaard held that most philosophical speculation is based on the fantasy that philosophers are privileged to contemplate existence from some absolute, perspectiveless perspective. He believed not only that one could not step outside oneself but also that the attempt to adopt such a disinterested posture toward life was both a contortion and self-destructive. Thus Kierkegaard argued for and wrote a more personal form of philosophy than did almost any of his predecessors. Thanks in large part to the lingering influence of the French philosopher René Descartes (1596–1650), who condemned the passions and imagination as impediments to the truth, philosophers had long held in low repute what we now think of as the right side of the brain. An epoch ahead of his time, Kierkegaard insisted that the emotions, anxiety included, are not dumb brutes trying to blinker our natural lights. Just the opposite: they have a great deal to tell us about ourselves.

Regarding the relationship between faith and morals Kierkegaard, in *Fear and Trembling*, offered a disturbing reading of the story of Abraham. After all, what God asked of Abraham was a transgression of the highest moral law. Today a large segment of American society fervently believes that the moral decline we are said to be experiencing directly correlates with a decline in church attendance. To those who champion faith as a form of moral therapy, Kierkegaard replies that without the right understanding there can be no right spirit. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* is an argosy of timely meditations on the relation between the how and the what of religious beliefs, and it can, I think, be very usefully put into play in the contemporary debate over the nature, status, and content of Christian dogma.

Although Kierkegaard made no attempt to bridge the leap of faith with a

sylogism, he offered some very promising deflections of the traditional arguments against religion. For instance, Feuerbach, Freud, and others have tried to break the spell of the sacred by arguing that no shred of evidence supports the truth claims of faith. Kierkegaard, however, convincingly argued that the question of faith cannot be answered objectively, in part because objective certainty has no need of the trust that is faith. Another important article in the traditional argument against religion is that belief in God is a desperate attempt to assuage the anxiety that comes with being mortal. For Kierkegaard, however, whoever has the passion and imagination to believe earnestly that he is living, minute by minute, before his Creator and Judge is not likely to be calmed by that awareness.

The perceptive cultural critic Philip Rieff once remarked that Kierkegaard's central intention was to produce guiding images of faith for an age that Kierkegaard believed was becoming fanatically secularized. Unlike any other philosopher before or after him, Kierkegaard devoted much reflection to the question of how to communicate moral and religious truths. He concluded that with very few exceptions such truths cannot be broadcast and memorized. Very few philosophers, to put it in Kierkegaard's own terms, could "move the waters of language" as he did. His theories are seamlessly stitched together with portraits, vignettes, and parables. On one page Kierkegaard constructed a rigorous philosophical argument and on the next he fleshed out his abstractions with a character such as his Knight of Faith. Where Kant communicated a moral ideal, Kierkegaard provided a deep sense of what it means to live in and see through such an ideal. Like Freud, but with different categories up his sleeve, Kierkegaard had a profound psychological appreciation of the internal forces with which every moral and spiritual aspirant contends. In *Sickness Unto Death*, Kierkegaard taught that most of us try all our lives to talk ourselves out of our moral and religious knowledge, because we do not want to be led to the sacrifices this knowledge commands. Kierkegaard tried to keep us from such acts of repression.

As the Hong translations will attest, Kierkegaard is one of a small cadre of philosophers who can be read for the sheer delight of their words. But such

praise would ring hollow to this philosopher-poet. On the final page of *Either/Or*, Kierkegaard wrote, "Only the truth that builds up is the truth for thee." Unlike other philosophers, Kierkegaard recommended himself as an edifying author, an anachronistic idea if ever there was one. And yet this is precisely how he should be regarded, as a thinker of supreme substance who could write like an angel. □

An Epic of Endurance

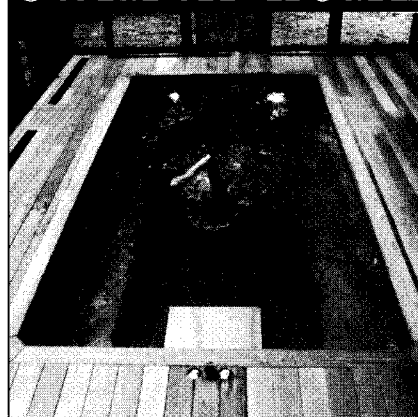
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THERE HAVE always been two Second World Wars in the consciousness of the Soviet people. There were the physical and emotional experiences that people endured, deeply traumatic but also a source of self-confidence. And there was the myth of the war, fostered by Stalin and embellished in the Brezhnev years. When reality flatly contradicts myth, it's relatively simple to distinguish between the two. To sort out the ways that reality overlaps and bleeds into myth is much more problematic.

A new collection of essays, *World War 2 and the Soviet People*, brilliantly explores this duality. The editors, John and Carol Garrard, have put together a dozen pieces, prefaced by an excellent essay of their own, that were originally presented as papers at an international conference held in Harrogate, England, in July of 1990—the first such conference attended both by Westerners and by a large number of (then still) Soviet scholars, and as a result unusually exciting. Three of the essays examine the state's manipulation of the war mythology—through Stalin's image as national and military leader, the Katyn massacre of Polish officers, and war historiography—either at the time or subsequently. The rest analyze the real impact of the war, using traditional historical data or literary and artistic treatments.

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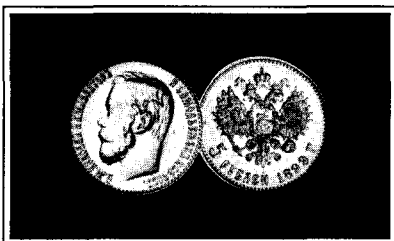
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The myth used to be ubiquitous. Visitors to the Soviet Union could hardly avoid encountering the Great Fatherland War, as it was routinely called. Often the encounter involved an (enforced) excursion to one of the "memorial ensembles," typically rife with oversized statuary and overamplified martial music. On Victory Day (May 9) and a number of other memorial days a red haze, glinting with medals, floated over the scene: red banners, red (Young Pioneer) kerchiefs, red tulips or carnations. As the Wellesley historian Nina Tumarkin notes here, in her "Story of a War Memorial," the ritualization began under Stalin but hypertrophied to bizarre proportions under Brezhnev. The apogee in both size and kitsch is Volgograd-Stalingrad's monument, a "snarling Motherland figure wielding an immense sword and an eternal flame blazing up from a hand clasping a stone torch, like a submerged Statue of Liberty."

In those years it took no skill to poke fun at the vulgarity, the gigantism and hoopla, or to exclaim indignantly over the lies implied by the state ceremonies and affirmed in the official version of history. It was easy, in short, to be an outsider. Insiders, however, even those not blind to the vulgarity and mendacity, saw the monuments and rituals as acknowledging human heroism and human suffering on a more than human scale. In the vast lie of Soviet history this was true: the Soviets did suffer horribly, and did behave heroically. They did defeat Hitler, at tremendous cost to each of them individually and to all of them collectively. The ceremonies paid tribute to that cost.

They did more. They evoked the single unifying experience in seventy years of a national history otherwise rent by terrible divisions. The state may have fostered those divisions, from the Whites and Reds of the civil war to the haves and have-nots of the 1970s, but the wariness and mistrust bred of them were nearly impossible to escape.

From 1941 to 1945, though, people were united with one another and, at least in their perception, with their leaders. The bogeymen of the 1920s and 1930s—kulaks, Trotskyites and Bukharinites, and assorted "enemies of the people"—were replaced by the Nazi foe. Sympathetic Allies transmitting decoded Nazi secrets and Lend-Lease supplies replaced a hostile universe bent on destroying the "cradle of

the revolution." Those years are often described exaltedly, as a liberating blast of fresh air between the stifling oppression of the pre-war purges and the postwar repressions. They summoned forth the best people were capable of, in a common experience and for a common goal that transcended ideological and other differences.

Artists, especially writers and musicians, were instrumental in encouraging that unity. The media, especially the radio, became both its agent and its symbol. (Moscow's and Leningrad's radio stations were prime targets for Luftwaffe bombs.) Popular songs and classics, poetry and dramas, the reading of letters from and to frontline soldiers—9,000 of the two million received by Radio Moscow—filled the air. The historian Richard Stites, in *Russian Popular Culture: Entertainment and Society Since 1930* (1992), writes of how

the airwaves linked front and rear, occupied and freed zones, besieged cities and Moscow. Waves of hope and pride were fused with radio frequencies when receivers intoned the solemn words: "*Slushai, front, govorit Moskva*" (Attention, frontline people, Moscow speaking); or "*Slushai, Moskva, govorit Leningrad*"—a notice to the nation that Leningraders were holding out against the brutal blockade.

The Soviet atlas of wartime infernos is chockablock with names: Kiev, Kharkov, Odessa, Kursk, Sevastopol, the street-by-street, house-by-house hell of Stalingrad. But because of its 900-day siege, Leningrad holds pride of place. A few years back, when revulsion against all things Soviet spurred the renaming of dozens of cities, Leningrad's reversion to St. Petersburg was one of the very few about which controversy raged. Unlike most of the country, the city was not divided between front line and rear, between soldiers and civilians. All were equally imperiled. Olga Berggolts became one of the nation's most beloved poets not least because throughout the dreadful winter of 1941-1942, when her husband died of starvation, she remained at her microphone and broadcast from the blockaded city.

HER SEX WAS not coincidental. Soviet women were the *sine qua non* of the Soviet victory, a fact acknowledged in state rhetoric and in certain public symbols. The numbers

are astonishing. At the front nearly half of all doctors, field surgeons, and medical assistants were women; all nurses were. Almost a million women served in the Red Army, some 200,000 in the air defense forces. The Central Women's School for Sniper Training (a women's specialty) graduated more than a thousand snipers, who killed more than 12,000 Germans. Seven thousand women were in the partisan units of German-occupied Belorussia, 2,000 in those of the Leningrad region, thousands more in the underground. Tens of thousands served on the front lines as cooks and laundresses, as radio operators, scouts, mortar crew members, parachutists, machine-gunners, tank commanders, and fighter pilots.

Extraordinary stories abound, and many individual women were decorated for their valor: Nina Onilova, an army nurse turned machine-gunner, who died of her wounds in 1942; Senior Sergeant Maria Baida, who "used her machine-pistol—and its butt—to kill enemy soldiers at close quarters"; Lyudmila Pavlichenko, "No. 1 sniper," who killed more than 300 Germans; the fliers Marina Raskova, who pressured the Soviet air force to form three women's air regiments, and Valentina Grizodubova, who completed 200 sorties on bombing raids and airlifts into Ukrainian partisan airfields.

But two of the most fascinating essays in this volume demonstrate that although certain images of female bravery received public homage, women also fought and suffered the war's depredations in ways no less significant if far less visible and heralded. John Erickson, the director of Defense Studies at Edinburgh University and an eminent historian of the war, writes eloquently of the plight of women who had to fight discrimination within the army (the "powder puff division") before they were allowed to fight the enemy, and whose needs—in housing, hygiene, and medical care—were routinely ignored. He writes with empathy of the women in the rear, who worked and lived in grueling conditions. Housewives became factory hands and matrons dug anti-tank ditches. Girls became miners, truckers, crane drivers. Millions were evacuated beyond the Urals. In addition to staffing hospitals, producing munitions, and working the railroads and the fields, they had somehow to deal with nearly uninhabitable

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PUZZLER CONTEST

Send your solved "Robin Hood" (page 119) to: *The Atlantic Monthly*, July Puzzler Contest, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116. *The Atlantic* will randomly draw three names from among all correct entries received by July 8. The winners' names will be published in the September issue. In addition, each of the winners will receive a complimentary one-year subscription to *Tough Cryptics*.

Rules: Only one entry per person allowed. No purchase necessary. No entries can be returned. All decisions are final. *The Atlantic* is not responsible for late or lost mail. Contest open to residents of the U.S. and Canada, 18 years or older, except employees of *The Atlantic* and their immediate families. Winners will be notified by mail. Contest void where prohibited and subject to all state, federal, and local laws and regulations.

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housing (in one improvised barracks six water pipes served 15,000 people) and nearly nonexistent fuel and food: roughly two pounds of bread was the daily diet for heavy-industry workers, less than half that for almost everyone else. They lost fathers, husbands, sons, and brothers. At least one generation of women lost the men they would have married and thus the children they would have borne.

To square their roles as fighters with their sense of feminine identity was indeed difficult for many women. The state iconography didn't help. Katherine Hodgson, a young scholar who teaches in Wales, writes with great sensitivity of the discrepancy between reality and the idealized representations of Woman as a Janus head with the supersoldier on one side, the patient and tender "eternal feminine" on the other. In a shake of the mythic kaleidoscope, women's strength and daring were presented as anomalous, called forth by circumstance; what women longed for was the girlish innocence of darning stockings and leaning on a man's shoulder. Both the daring and the longing were real, but neither paradigm left much room for the heroism inhering in simple survival, for the gaunt, worn, inexpressibly weary Leningrad women of Olga Berggolts's poems:

You and I didn't blow up any tanks.
In a welter of everyday cares
We captured nameless heights;
but these heights are not marked on
any map.

What map shows your steep
staircase, leading home,
up which you, staggering with
hunger,
carried buckets of water in winter?
And what map shows the journey,
which you made ten times
alone, in blizzard, frost and air-raid,
taking five to the graveyard?

Only you and I, we alone,
neighbor,
remember our arduous journeys.
We know they are not to be found
chronicled in maps or war reports.

To those women no statue has ever been erected.

Nor, for that matter, is there one to the many others, women and men alike, who were victims of the war but not of the Nazis. Until recently facts were unavailable or fudged: no one knew even how many people were lost during the war. Yet millions of civilians and

soldiers perished who need not have.

Countless Red Army soldiers were killed, wounded, or captured in the first weeks of the war because of Stalin's refusal to accept clear and explicit evidence of German intentions. (After the war he suppressed memoirs and shut historians out of the archives to prevent challenges to the official version of events.) Inadequate and out-of-date materiel took more lives until American trucks came to mobilize a Red Army limping along on foot and with horse-drawn artillery: more than a million soldiers died in the encirclement of Kiev alone. As Vasily Grossman, himself a frontline newspaper correspondent during the war, described in his novel *Life and Fate*, each military unit suffered from being under the twin control of a political commissar and a military commander, owing to which military considerations were often catastrophically subordinated to political and ideological rigidity. (Frank Ellis's essay on Grossman treats this issue.)

People were persecuted on the sole basis of nationality. Vera Tolz, an exceptionally fine scholar based at Radio Liberty in Munich, writes of the deportation of ethnic groups, enriching the earlier research of Soviet and Western scholars alike with newly available archival material. Stalin deported Poles in 1940, Balts in the spring of 1941, ethnic Germans (residents of Russia since Catherine the Great invited them) a few months later, Finns in 1942. In 1943–1944, even as the war was tipping toward an Allied victory, Stalin ordered the "resettlement" of ethnic groups from the Caucasus, Crimea, and Georgia. Conditions were so harsh that up to eight percent died in transit, and within five years another 20 to 25 percent died of their penal exile at the so-called "special settlements."

Information about these victims is no longer hard to acquire. It is still very hard to assimilate. Despite its burden of sadness, the war used to be a wellspring of pride. Now the pride has been adulterated by shame, complicated by anger and anguish. The certainties of the old mythology were surely more comforting, especially given the maelstrom that Russian life has become. Nevertheless, a great many Russians have the courage to scrutinize all of their nation's past, the compassion to mourn all its victims, and the mettle to honor all its many heroes and heroines. □

Brief Reviews



THE ELEPHANT VANISHES by Haruki Murakami. Knopf, \$21.00. Like his novels, Mr. Murakami's idiosyncratic short stories combine totally realistic, often trivial detail with fantastic metaphors for the anxieties and problems of modern life. An exception to the pattern is the entirely fantastic account of the Little Green Monster. The monster may represent boredom, sexual neurosis, denial of the imagination, or anything else the reader chooses. Whatever the choice, the tale is as disconcertingly haunting as Hans Christian Andersen's tale about the little fir tree." This is a fine collection by a distinctive writer.

A SHORT HISTORY OF FINANCIAL EUPHORIA by John Kenneth Galbraith. Viking, \$16.00. "The world of finance," Mr. Galbraith points out, "hails the invention of the wheel over and over again, often in a slightly more unstable version." He proves the case with dourly irreverent analyses of financial debacle from the tulip craze of the seventeenth century to the recent plague of junk bonds, demonstrating that all have worked on the same base of delusion. His solution to the problem of enthusiastic greed depends on individual judgment. He recommends "an enhanced skepticism that would resolutely associate too evident optimism with probable foolishness and that would not associate intelligence with the acquisition, the deployment, or, for that matter, the administration of large sums of money." It all suggests certain adages in the vernacular having to do with looking too good to be true, a free lunch, and what is born every minute.

CURRICULUM VITAE by Muriel Spark. Houghton Mifflin, \$22.95. Ms. Spark's autobiography ends with the publication of her first, immediately successful

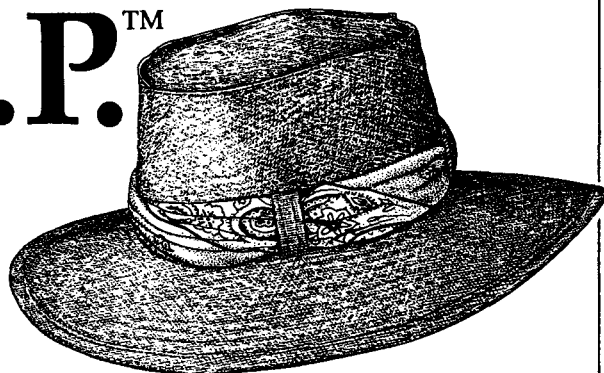
novel, in 1957. A great deal happened before that great day—schools, memorable teachers, gingery relatives (Ms. Spark comes of a redheaded tribe), a bad marriage leading to a hitch in Southern Rhodesia, buzz bombs in London, an ultimately daft collaborator, some hack journalism, and a series of jobs on the fringes of the publishing world. Ms. Spark's reports of people and adventures range from the demurely humorous (an inventory of her grandmother's wardrobe) to the savagely blunt (the aimless female colonists of Rhodesia). She has converted most of her experiences into fiction, an act that she explicitly acknowledges without explaining how she performed it. Would-be authors will no doubt find this omission a disappointment. Other readers should thoroughly enjoy Ms. Spark's reminiscences. She probably could not write a dull line if she tried.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF NOWHERE by James Howard Kunstler. Simon & Schuster, \$23.00. Mr. Kunstler believes that the automobile and suburban developers have combined to destroy cities, countryside, and community coherence. His diatribe against the villains is provocative and supported by examples of misguided moves such as the abandonment of rail transport, contrived through an alliance of oil producers and car manufacturers, and building codes that make certain sensible and traditional types of construction impossible. He describes a few—a very few—examples of recent communities designed to be working towns rather than vast and isolated dormitories. He castigates town planners, zoning laws, and tax systems with persuasive fury. One can hardly dispute his claim that the fossil-fuel supply will eventually be exhausted and that an oil-based economy will be stopped dead by that event, or ignore his demand that we begin rethinking and rearranging our automobile-based culture before it occurs.

PICASSO AND DORA by James Lord. Farrar Straus & Giroux, \$35.00. Mr. Lord's memoir describes his long association with Dora Maar, photographer, unappreciated painter, former mistress of Picasso. Mr. Lord considers it a friendship. The reader is more likely to consider it an obsession. As a minor art

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dealer and a passionate admirer of Picasso, Mr. Lord had reason to cultivate Dora Maar, who could talk excitingly about the great man and introduce the young American to other members of the French artistic world. These facts do not altogether account for the author's willingness to endure insult, abuse, and exploitation by an older woman whose flash-fire charm was accompanied by selfishness, stinginess, and unprovoked bad temper. The motive was not sexual, for Mr. Lord does not care for female lovers. However odd the relationship may seem, it is convincing, while the people peripherally involved, the professional gossip and backbiting, plus the occasional glimpses of Picasso being either kindly or maliciously cruel, are fascinating and very well described.

GIRL, INTERRUPTED by Susanna Kaysen. *Turtle Bay*, \$17.00. According to Ms. Kaysen, she was, at the age of eighteen, shipped off to McLean Psychiatric Hospital, in Massachusetts, after a twenty-minute interview with a doctor she had never seen before. Her admission can hardly have been so offhand, for McLean is expensive and it is unlikely that a teenager with no resources would have been able to sign herself in without preliminary agreement by her parents. That omission aside, Ms. Kaysen's sketches of fellow patients, staff, and curious environmental rules are perceptive, while her description of the time distortions caused by her condition emphasizes the narrow gap between normal—that is, controllable—action and what is considered mental illness. Her vignettes are sometimes comic, more often melancholy, and never, one suspects, quite the whole truth—which the author possibly does not know.

EPSTEIN by Stephen Gardiner. *Viking*, \$35.00. Mr. Gardiner's biography of the sculptor Jacob Epstein (1880–1959) is subtitled "Artist Against the Establishment." The establishment that Epstein, the American son of Polish Jews, chose to confront was that of Great Britain in the years before the First World War, where anti-Semitism was far from uncommon and sculpture, at least in the public sphere, was controlled by an old-boy network devoted to sleek mediocrity. Epstein himself thought that the English climate en-

couraged "respectable sloth." In any case, his imaginative compositions disturbed the complacent, his nude figures outraged the prissy, and his practice of direct carving was an implied reproach to sculptors who had never laid hand to chisel. That covered practically everybody. (If the sculptor's conduct contributed to the disapproval he encountered, Mr. Gardiner, a long-time friend of the Epstein family, ignores the possibility.) Epstein nevertheless became a British subject, which, when the war broke out, caused him no end of trouble with local officials, who thought a fellow doing nothing comprehensible in a coastal cottage must be a German spy, and with the army, which wanted to draft him and, briefly, did. He briskly had a nervous breakdown. Regardless of denunciations, lack of money, erratic patrons, and unorthodox domestic arrangements, Epstein proceeded stubbornly with what he considered his proper work—the creation of meaningful sculpture. He eventually achieved both prosperity and a knighthood, making his life a satisfactory, if slow, success story. Mr. Gardiner recounts that story conscientiously, giving more careful attention to facts than he does to pronouns and frequently referring to controversial works that are not included among the book's parsimonious illustrations.

ABLAZE by Piers Paul Read. *Random House*, \$25.00. The bungling that led to the disaster at the Chernobyl atomic-power plant, the extent of the catastrophe, and the cover-ups and buck-passings that followed it have been reported in the past. Mr. Read has taken advantage of the now greater access to Soviet records and the greater frankness of formerly Soviet citizens to assemble information on the history of the Soviet atomic system and the activities of the separate, sometimes antagonistic, bureaucracies that controlled it. His conversations with local informants have led him to conclude that Chernobyl, by thoroughly shaking the faith of citizens in the efficiency of their authorities, was a major cause of the fall of Gorbachev and the collapse of the Soviet Union. That last point may be debatable, but Mr. Read's account as a whole is both informative and cautionary.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams

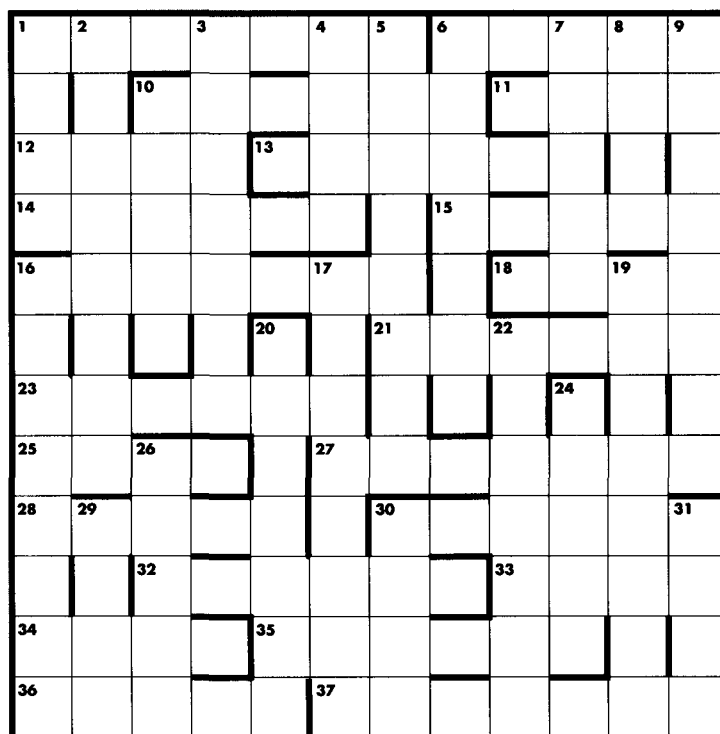
THE PUZZLER

BY EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

ROBIN HOOD

Like the outlaw of Sherwood Forest, we have robbed from the rich and given to the poor in this puzzle. That is, from each of 11 answers that are too long to fit into the diagram we have stolen a letter, and we have given those same letters to 11 answers that are too short to fit into the diagram. All deletions and additions result in new words. By circling the letters given to the poor, solvers will find, reading left to right column by column, a phrase descriptive of Mr. Hood's methods. Clue answers include four proper nouns.

See page 115 for Puzzler contest details. The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 117.



ACROSS

1. Examining doctor returned with Merry Men's leader
6. Important boat's back in glass bottle
10. Expedition is heading west, keeping at a distance
11. For a Turkish palace, raise bucks
12. British seaport submerged by river
13. Very hot nuts, in fact
14. Deer makes noises like a farm animal beginning to eat
15. Soil that's rich without containing oxygen
16. Suggestions about intelligence circles
18. Item taken back in before polishing
21. Heard about armed-forces branch again
23. Reined horses around Greek nymph

25. Pony has eaten a card from a mystical deck
27. Earl spars with lively wits
28. Pole's keeping company with a pet that brings good luck
30. Boxes containing dead sticks
32. Smart, pocketing gold of some Greek actors
33. Left out nine napkins?
34. Spat in front of one tree
35. Comfort Liberal supporter of the arts?
36. You sign for naval officers
37. Doctor trimmed and scooped

DOWN

1. Introduction for *Me* rejected
2. One developing regressive gun worship
3. Hinder what in Spain is a ship
4. Handle English chap's uprising
5. Doctor Rogers describing Sunday school money-makers

6. Something in a garden failing to live
7. The last piece of cake for you
8. Bolts old violin's back
9. Lights on either side of true cowcatchers
10. A character's flourish lights up
16. 100 in a group shout about rocking tune
17. Finale, with listeners, was charming
19. Petersen plays make-believe
20. Turned anything but dull about western part of a city
22. Mutt went first and rolled over
24. After six, girl excited a Roman poet
26. English philosopher firm about Central America
29. Crazy Horse's prop
30. Los Angeles riot's initial spirit
31. Observe a lot of water in your mouth?

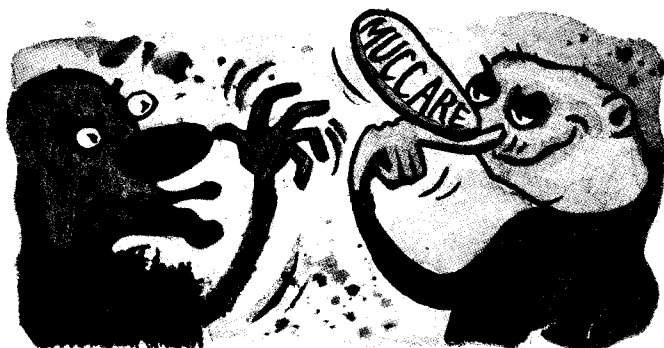
NOTE: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

WORD HISTORIES

BY CRAIG M. CARVER

mock

Tensions between the military and President Bill Clinton surfaced on a visit paid by Clinton to the U.S.S. *Theodore Roosevelt* last spring. One reporter later recalled the visit in a remark to the President: "Sailors . . . were *mocking* you . . . even though you are the Commander in Chief." The origins of *mock* (to ridicule, deride) are uncertain. The word may be from the dialect German *mucken*, "to growl, grumble." The famous word chronicler Eric Partridge has proposed that *mock* originates in *Momos*, the Greek god



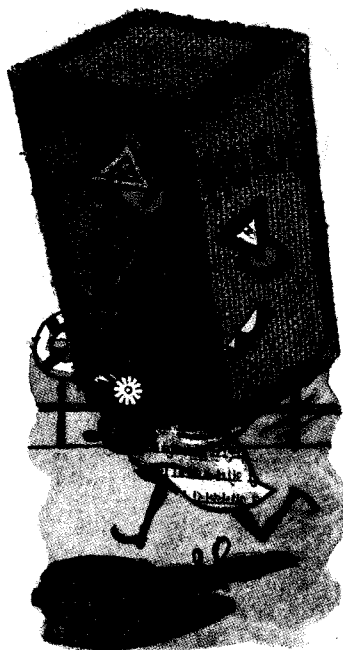
of ridicule, who criticized virtually everything. Most authorities, however, believe that the word comes instead from the Latin *mucus*, "mucus," and its colloquial derivative **muc-*

care, "to wipe the nose." This became *mocquer* in medieval France, where—perhaps not surprisingly—the verb acquired the sense of wiping or thumbing one's nose as a gesture of

contempt and ridicule. (The reflexive verb form of "to ridicule" in Modern French is a vestige of the nose-wiping idea: *se moquer de quelqu'un* literally means "to wipe one's nose at someone.") The word was quickly appropriated by the English and spelled *moke* or *mock* ("Have the non other man to *moke*, but ever me?"—*Man-kind*, 1450). Because to *mock* a thing is often to parody or imitate it, the word later also came to mean "imitation," as in *mock turtle*, "a dish consisting of calf's head dressed with sauces and condiments so as to resemble turtle."

posh

In his first radio address, last February, President Bill Clinton discussed cutting costs on Capitol Hill, including dispensing with "needless luxuries like *posh* dining rooms." According to one often-heard theory, *posh* (classy, stylish, first-rate) derives from an acronym for "Port Outward, Starboard Home," which was supposedly stamped on some tickets for passage to India, and stipulated the location of the



passenger's cabin. Those who could afford this luxury, the story goes, enjoyed shadier, cooler cabins than their fellow travelers. The acronym then became a word in its own right to refer to anything luxurious or expensive. Sadly, there is no hard evidence—not even a stamped ticket—to support this clever tale. Others have suggested that *posh* is from *poshed up* (dressed up), which in turn is probably from *polished up*. Still others suggest that *posh* is an alteration of the Scots *tosh* (neat, trim). A final possibility is that the word comes by way of thieves' slang from the Romany, or Gypsy, word *pāsh*, which originally meant "half," as in "halfpenny," and then, altered to *posh*, came to refer to money in general, especially coins ("That sort of patter . . . is the thing to get the *posh*"—Montagu Williams, *Round London*, 1892). Although the shift in meaning from "money" to "moneyed" ("Frank . . . said . . . he had a friend waiting outside for him named Murray *Posh*, adding he was quite a swell"—George Grossmith and Walter Weedon Grossmith, *Diary of a Nobody*, 1892) and finally to "swank, expensive, first class" is not well documented, most sources agree that this is the most plausible history of the word.

scuttle

Just before leaving office last January, Attorney General William Barr accepted a scathing report that criticized William Sessions's conduct as FBI director. Sessions responded angrily: "My Attorney General accepted the report and then fled the office. He was in league with others in the department who were determined to *scuttle* the director." *Scuttle* (to damage; to abandon; to sink a ship) is from the Old French *escoutille* (a ship's hatchway). Adopted into English in the fifteenth century as *scuttle*, the word then referred not to a hatchway but to a smaller square or rectangular hole either in the deck, for purposes of communication between decks, or in the side of a ship, for light and air ("Wee have had in a watch in the night a fish flie into a little *scuttle* of a cabbin, noe bigger then the hande of a man"—Captain Wyatt, *The Voyage of Robert Dudley*, ca. 1595). Used as a verb, *scuttle* meant "to cut holes in the sides or bottom of a ship in order to sink it" ("He was the mildest manner'd man / That ever *scuttled* ship or cut a throat"—Lord Byron, *Don Juan*, 1821). The origin of the French *escoutille* is disputed. Because both a *scuttle* and a hatchway have lids or trap-door coverings, *escoutille*



may have come from the Dutch *schutten* (to shut). Alternatively, the Old French word may come from the Old Spanish *escotilla*, a diminutive of *escote*, "an opening in a garment." Some suggest that the word may also be related to the French *écoute*, "listening place." A *scuttled-butt* was a butt, or cask, with a square hole cut in it, kept on deck to hold fresh water. It was around this drinking barrel that shipmates gathered and exchanged the latest *scuttlebutt*, or gossip.

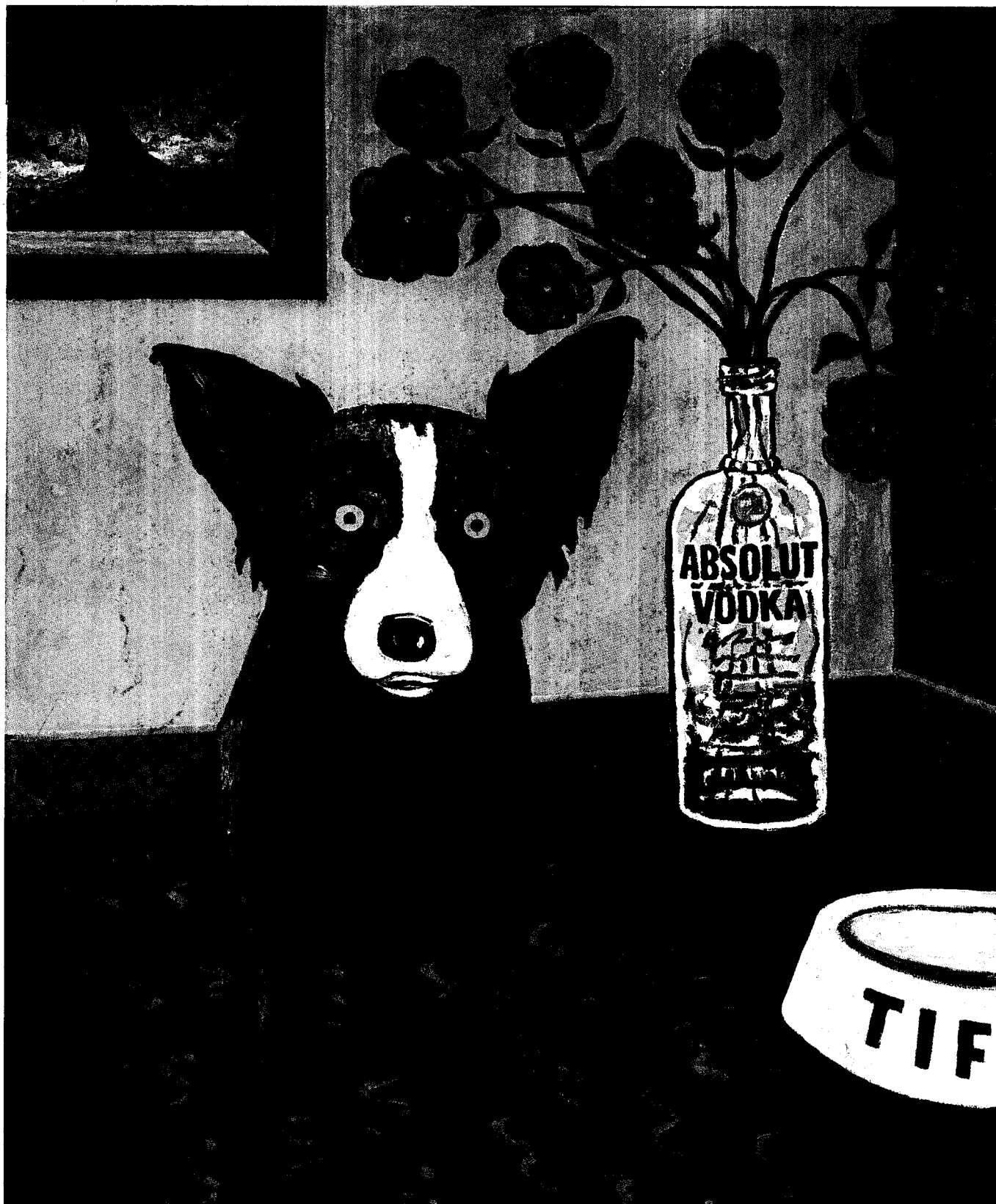
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